The fashioning of a new world
youth culture and the origins of the mass outdoor movement in Interwar Britain

Thompson, Simon Robert

Awarding institution:
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Simon Robert Thompson

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'The Wayfarers' Fellowship'

This shall be a bond between us,
That we are of one blood, you and I;
That we have cried peace to all men,
And claimed kinship with every living thing;
That we hate war and sloth and greed and love fellowship
And that we shall go singing to the fashioning of a new world.[1]

Illustration 1 (Front Cover): 'Hiking' (1936) by James Walker Tucker (Laing Art Gallery).

[1] L. Paul, *The Folk Trail: An Outline of the Philosophy and Activities of Woodcraft Fellowships* (1929), 11. (Note that in all footnotes place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.)

Abstract

In the early 1930s, the 'hiking craze' transformed strenuous walking in the country from a minority leisure activity into a mass outdoor movement. This thesis examines the social and cultural origins of the movement. Many commentators at the time portrayed hiking as a youth movement, representing a radical break with the past. Subsequent academic studies have emphasised continuity with one of two pre-war traditions: an upper-middle-class, intellectual, neo-romantic walking tradition; and an upper-working- and lower-middle-class, mainly nonconformist, tradition of self-improvement and 'rational recreation'. Some historians have highlighted ideological aspects of the mass outdoor movement, often conflating it with the campaign for access to open country and in some cases portraying 'the battle for the countryside' as a conflict between urban socialist workers and Tory landowners. This has led to the widely held conception that the mass outdoor movement was above all a phenomenon associated with the industrial towns flanking the southern Pennines, where the highest profile access protests took place.

Drawing upon newspaper reports, social surveys, autobiographies, oral histories, club records and the archives of the main associations linked to the outdoor, access and preservation movements, this thesis argues that past studies have placed undue reliance upon sources documenting the fears and aspirations of a relatively small number of vocal middle-aged, middle-class leaders of the outdoor movement, or equally exceptional working-class activists, while neglecting the motivations of the vast majority of walkers. An over-emphasis on the neo-romantic and campaigning aspects of the movement has obscured its role in creating a social space within which youths and young adults of both sexes could interact, beyond the supervision of adult authority figures. The thesis argues that the mass outdoor movement was more geographically widespread and socially diverse than previous studies have suggested, and that it was essentially apolitical and escapist. Young hikers nevertheless believed themselves to be part of a new social movement, and a defining characteristic of that movement was youth. Some two decades before the appearance of the 'Teddy Boys' and 'Mods' – the first widely acknowledged expressions of mass youth culture in Britain – hikers had many of the characteristics now associated with a youth movement, including their own distinctive dress and behavioural conventions.

While the two pre-War traditions remained influential in the interwar years, particularly in relation to the preservation and access movements, neither of them can explain the sudden emergence of the 'hiking craze' and the mass outdoor movement that evolved

from it. Reinterpreting the movement as an early manifestation of mass youth culture sheds new light on evolving social relations between generations, classes and genders, and provides fresh insights into changing attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside in the two decades following the First World War.

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Abbreviations

AC	Alpine Club
AJ	*Alpine Journal*
APRS	Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland
AR	Annual Report
B&MLRF	Bolton & Mid-Lancs Ramblers' Federation
BL	British Library
BMC	British Mountaineering Council
CaCJ	*Cairngorm Club Journal*
CCJ	*Climbers' Club Journal*
CHA	Co-operative Holidays Association
Commons Society	Commons Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society
CPRE	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
CPRW	Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales
DJH	Deutsche Jugendherbergen
ExCo	Executive Committee
FRCC	Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District
FRCCJ	*Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*
G&WSRFH	*Glasgow & West of Scotland Ramblers' Federation Handbook*
H&C	*Hiker and Camper*
HF	Holiday Fellowship
IHR	Institute of Historical Research
ILP	Independent Labour Party
JCH	*Journal of Contemporary History*
London Federation	Federation of Rambling Clubs (based in London)
Manchester Federation	Manchester & District Ramblers' Federation
M&DRFH	*Manchester & District Ramblers' Federation Handbook*
MERL	Museum of English Rural Life
MR	Monthly Report
NCRF	National Council of Ramblers' Federations
NHRU	National Home Readers' Union
NWSA	North West Sound Archive
OoD	*Out-o'-Doors*
OWC	Order of Woodcraft Chivalry
PD&NCFPS	Peak District & Northern Counties Footpath Preservation Society
PyP	Pen-y-Pass
RA	Ramblers' Association
RAA	Ramblers' Association Archives
RCJ	*Rucksack Club Journal*
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
RH	*Rural History*
SCR	Sheffield Clarion Ramblers
SCRH	*Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' Handbook*
SLSL	Sheffield Local Studies Library
SMC	Scottish Mountaineering Club
SMCJ	*Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*
SYHA	Scottish Youth Hostels Association
T&C	*Tramper and Cyclist*
WCMA	Working Class Movement Archives
YRCJ	*Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal*
YHA	Youth Hostels Association
YHAR	*YHA Rucksack*
YMA	Youth Movement Archives
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Chapter 1

Introduction

Nine million adults in England walk for recreation at least once a month, making it the joint most popular leisure activity in the country.[1] Although 90 per cent of the population live in an urban or suburban setting, people undertaking long walks for pleasure overwhelmingly do so in the countryside. The Peak District National Park, for example, with a resident population of just 38,000, is one of the most visited rural areas on earth, attracting an estimated 22 million visitor days each year.[2] Yet this popular fascination with country walking is a comparatively recent phenomenon. As Harry Roberts observed in 1940, before the Second World War most people transported ten miles out of the town in which they lived and worked were in 'an unexplored country'.[3] The transformation of strenuous country walking from a minority to mass leisure activity (hereafter referred to as the 'mass outdoor movement') started in the mid-1920s. By the early 1930s 'hiking' had become a 'craze', attracting widespread attention in contemporary media. This thesis explores the social and cultural origins of the movement.

Since walking is a ubiquitous activity, it is necessary from the outset to define the scope of the activity to be addressed. This thesis discusses the deliberate act of undertaking a long country walk for pleasure. It is *not* concerned with strenuous walking as a means to other ends, nor with strollers or *flâneurs*; and although it argues that the mass outdoor movement shares a common heritage with some forms of urban walking, it is primarily concerned with walking in a rural setting.[4]

Jeremy Burchardt makes the unprovable (but probably correct) claim that walking for pleasure is as old as civilisation.[5] Keith Thomas argues convincingly that walking in the country has been popular among British town-dwellers since at least the seventeenth century.[6] But most historians agree that a discernible 'outdoor movement' did not arise in Britain until the late eighteenth century, when Wordsworth and the other 'unacknowledged legislators of the world' transformed long walks through natural

[1] Together with 'eating out'. www.ramblers.org.uk (4 Jan. 2014).
[2] www.nationalparks.gov.uk (4 Jan. 2014).
[3] H. Roberts, *The Practical Way to Keep Fit* (1940), 149.
[4] I have arbitrarily defined a 'strenuous' walk as one lasting more than three hours.
[5] J. Burchardt, *Paradise Lost: Rural Idyll and Social Change in England Since 1800* (2002), ch. 10.
[6] K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, Penguin edn, (1983), 247-54.

landscapes into a deliberate cultural act.[7] As strenuous country walking evolved from a minority to a mass leisure pursuit a new vocabulary arose to describe the activity: 'tramping', 'rambling' and 'hiking' are essentially synonyms; 'bogtrotting', 'fell-walking' and 'hill-walking' describe the same activity on moorland and mountains; and these activities gradually transmute into 'scrambling', 'climbing' or 'mountaineering', depending upon the steepness of the terrain and the season.

Explanations linking the origins of the movement to urbanisation and industrialisation, the study of natural sciences, and the Romantic movement were first advanced in the mid-nineteenth century by upper-middle-class intellectuals, such as Leslie Stephen, who were themselves keen mountaineers and trampers, and have been repeated by numerous historians since.[8] There is also broad agreement on the development of the outdoor movement before the First World War. The existence of an intellectual, upper-middle-class romantic tradition is documented in the walking-tour genre of literature, innumerable essays, and the journals of the early mountaineering clubs established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (collectively referred to as the 'senior' clubs in later years).[9] Indeed, such is the profusion of literature produced by upper-middle-class walkers that many historians assumed, until recently, that in the nineteenth century strenuous country walking was almost exclusively an activity undertaken by the intellectual elite. Writing in 1959, Morris Marples maintained that before the War 'walking for pleasure, like climbing, was associated particularly with the intellectual classes'.[10] However, the emergence of a nascent access and preservation movement, consisting of regional footpath preservation societies and the Commons Preservation Society (established in 1865), suggests the existence of a less well-documented, but numerically significant, informal country-walking tradition among working people in the mid-nineteenth century. Many natural history societies and field clubs, in some cases with a largely autodidact artisan membership, also organized 'scientific rambles' in the countryside surrounding rapidly growing industrial towns and cities.[11]

[7] P. B. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* (1821). See B. Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background: Studies in the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period*, 1972 Pelican ed., 240-77 (first pubd.1940); M. H. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle, 1959).

[8] E.g. Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, ch.10; J. Amato, *On Foot: A History of Walking* (New York, 2004), Ch.4.

[9] E.g. R. L. Stevenson, 'Walking Tours', in *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers* (1881); A. N. Cooper, *A Tramp's Schooling* (1909); H. Belloc, *The Footpath Way* (1911).

[10] M. Marples, *Shank's Pony: A Study of Walking* (1959), 133.

[11] H. Taylor, *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement* (Keele, 1997), ch.3; D. E. Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (1976).

By the closing decades of the nineteenth century the existence of a distinct, upper-working- and lower-middle-class tradition becomes clearer from the historical record. Rambling clubs, consisting of skilled workers, clerks and shopkeepers, proliferated across the country, often as adjuncts to religious or educational institutions seeking adherents to their cause by promoting 'rational recreation' as an improving alternative to the pub. The Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA), founded in 1893, provided extended low-cost walking holidays for working people as a physically, spiritually and morally bracing alternative to commercialised leisure at seaside resorts. At around the same time, altruistic or controlling adults formed a number of 'youth movements', such as the Boys' Brigade and the Boy Scouts, that deployed outdoor activities to instil manly virtues and combat juvenile delinquency among the urban working and lower-middle classes. The first avowedly socialist rambling clubs also sprang up, in some cases affiliated to the Clarion movement.[12]

Historians disagree on the relative size and importance of the two pre-War traditions. In one of the first academic studies of the mass outdoor movement, completed in 1973, Pat Rickwood characterised pre-War participants as upper-middle-class academics and professionals plus smaller groups of skilled artisans, youth organizations and chapel clubs.[13] In 1985, Helen Walker argued that 'in the late nineteenth century…rambling…was restricted to those with time at their disposal and...the financial means to travel to rural areas. The individuals who rambled…included primarily aesthetes, academics and members of the legal profession.'[14] Two years later, Ann Holt argued that walking had been a popular pastime among urban workers since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but conceded that walking's 'public image' until the 1930s was middle-class, romantic and literary.[15] Writing in 2002, Burchardt agreed with Rickwood that most walkers were either members of the 'bohemian' cultural avant-garde (citing Stephen) or intellectual artisans, but was unable to determine which predominated or whether rambling was common or exceptional.[16] The main disagreement among historians, however, centres upon what triggered the dramatic interwar expansion of the movement. Did it result from the gradual 'trickle-down' of the upper-middle-class neo-romantic tradition? Or was it simply an expansion

[12] D. Prynn, 'The Clarion Clubs, Rambling and the Holiday Associations in Britain since the 1890s', *JCH* 11, 2 (1976), 65-77.
[13] P.W. Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside in England and Wales 1919-1939' (PhD, Leicester University, 1973).
[14] H. J. Walker, 'The Popularization of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940', *British Journal of Sports History* 2 (1985),141.
[15] A. Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers: Surviving a Thirties Fashion', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 4, 1 (1987), 56-67.
[16] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost,* ch.10.

of an early industrial tradition of country walking among workers? To what extent was it a protest against social inequality and class? What regional differences existed and why? What religious traditions and political ideologies, if any, were particularly characteristic of the movement? Some researchers also recognised that the age and gender of participants in the movement changed radically between the wars. Burchardt, for example, draws attention to the significant age gap between the leaders of ramblers' federations and the majority of walkers.[17] However, he did not pursue the implications of this observation.

Academic interest in the subject was stimulated, in part, by the publication of two popular histories of the outdoor movement: Howard Hill's *Freedom to Roam* (1980) and Tom Stephenson's *The Forbidden Land* (1989).[18] Both books pursue an overtly political agenda and have a pronounced regional bias. Hill's book was described at the time as the first comprehensive history of the open-air movement, but it is in fact a history of the *access* movement, focused on the North of England and, to a lesser extent, Scotland, as the sub-title – *The Struggle for Access to Britain's Moors and Mountains* – makes clear. Hill was born in Sheffield in 1913 and started work in a coal mine in the 1920s. He was made redundant during the Depression and became a political activist, first in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and then the Communist Party.[19] He was also active in the Ramblers' Association. Hill repeated the conventional wisdom that the earliest rambling clubs were '"Gentlemen's Clubs" whose members came from the ranks of the well-to-do', notwithstanding the fact that he provides evidence for an extensive, if poorly recorded, working-class walking tradition in the nineteenth century. Significantly, he maintained that the motives of the 'people's clubs' were fundamentally different from those of the 'gentlemen's clubs', claiming that working-class ramblers went into the country 'not to look at nature with the dreaming gaze of poets and writers but to regain good fellowship, amidst the mountains and dales, away from the antagonistic relationship of the factory'.[20]

Stephenson's book, edited by Ann Holt and published posthumously, summarises a lifetime of journalism and lobbying by Britain's best-known access campaigner. Born in Chorley, Lancashire in 1893, Stephenson was an autodidact naturalist and rambler who left school at 13 to work in a calico mill. At night he studied in the local library and

[17] Ibid., 128.
[18] H. Hill, *Freedom to Roam* (Ashbourne, 1980); T. Stephenson, *Forbidden Land* (Manchester, 1989).
[19] www.grahamstevenson.me.uk, Communist Biographies (30 Dec.2015).
[20] Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 18, 15. D. Rubinstein, 'Review of "Freedom to Roam" by Howard Hill', *History Workshop Journal*, 11 (1981), 179-81.

attended Burnley Technical College, and on Sundays he explored the moors. He ultimately won one of two national scholarships to study geology at the Royal College of Science, but forfeited his place during his wartime imprisonment as a conscientious objector. Subsequently he became a Labour activist, outdoor correspondent for the *Daily Herald*, Secretary of the Ramblers' Association, a 'bloody-minded visionary' and a tireless access campaigner.[21] Like Hill, Stephenson was primarily concerned with the struggle of northern working-class ramblers, like himself, to gain the 'right to roam' over privately-owned Pennine moors.

Writing within an academic framework at roughly the same time in 1979 and 1980, Alun Howkins and John Lowerson pursued a similar agenda, arguing that the campaign for access to open country, or 'battle for the countryside', reflected social inequality, class structures and profound regional differences.[22] They dismissed walking in southern England as 'a gentle extension of the suburbanites' rural dreams', while claiming that rambling in the North was 'a crusade, driven by a fiercely co-operative spirit and the desperate need to escape from depressed townscapes'.[23] Lowerson characterised the outdoor movement before the War as 'socially exclusive', but claimed that between the wars it became a 'mass working-class activity'. He criticised the formal rambling movement at the time for failing to recognise the access campaign as 'a question of mass proletarian liberation'.[24] Although Howkins and Lowerson were primarily concerned with the mass outdoor movement as a protest against social injustice, they argued that its cultural origins were 'concern for health and the drives of a much-distorted belated Romanticism'.[25] Lowerson claimed that 'the grind of the depression made the search for hazily imagined [rural] roots even stronger, and the desperation at its destruction or annexation even more intense'.[26]

Subsequent research challenges Howkins' and Lowerson's interpretation of the ideology of the mass outdoor movement. Holt argues that by the 1930s overt political affiliations had disappeared even from rambling clubs founded before the War on socialist principles.[27] Noting that progressive socialists and conservative preservationists alike defended walking as a physical and spiritual escape from the city

[21] 'Prophet of the Pennine Way', J. A. K. Sheard, *Lancashire Life*, Apr.1989.
[22] J. Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', in F. Gloversmith, ed., *Class, Culture and Social Change: A New View of the 1930s* (Brighton, 1980), 268; J. Lowerson and A. Howkins, 'Leisure in the Thirties' in A. Tomlinson, ed., *Leisure and Social Control* (Brighton, 1981).
[23] A. Howkins and J. Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure 1919-1939* (1979), 48, 50.
[24] Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', 268, 275.
[25] Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 48.
[26] Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', 278.
[27] Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers', 59.

and a moral and healthy alternative to the pub and cinema, David Matless rejects any notion of a core ideology, arguing that rambling should be seen as a movement in the same sense as movements in art or architecture.[28] However, in 'Country Visiting: A Memoir', Raphael Samuel continued to argue that 'rambling in the 1930s was …very much part of the unofficial culture of the British Left'.[29]

There is also disagreement with Howkins' and Lowerson's analysis of the class composition of the movement. Holt maintains that interwar ramblers were mainly upper-working and lower-middle-class.[30] Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957) supports this view: 'In the thirties the craze for "hiking"… seemed to me to affect the lower-middle classes more than others, [though] the working classes went too'.[31] Benny Rothman, Secretary of the Lancashire District of the British Workers Sports Federation agreed, claiming that 'the rambling clubs that existed in the North, apart from Sheffield…were mainly middle class in origin and outlook…ordinary working class ramblers were shunned'.[32]

During the mid-1980s, the academic debate moved on from class struggle to explore other possible causes for the rapid interwar expansion of the outdoor movement. The change was triggered in part by Philip Colls and Robert Dodd's *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880 to 1920* (1986), in particular Howkins' chapter 'The Discovery of Rural England', where he expanded his earlier argument on the neo-romantic origins of the outdoor movement.[33] Howkins discussed these ideas with Helen Walker prior to the publication of Colls and Dodd, and her thesis 'The Outdoor Movement in England and Wales 1900-1939' (1987) argues for the neo-romantic roots of the mass outdoor movement.[34]

Locating her thesis within the academic debate about English national identity, Walker adopts a very broad definition of the 'outdoor movement' embracing the growth of suburbia and garden cities, the 'back-to-the-land' movement, motor-touring and cycling, as well as country walking. Influenced by Raymond Williams and Martin

[28] D. Matless, 'The Art of Right Living: Landscape and Citizenship 1918-1939', in S. Pile and N. Thrift, eds., *Mapping the Subject - Geographies of Cultural Transformation* (1995), 71.
[29] R. Samuel, 'Country Visiting: A Memoir', *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (1998), 142.
[30] Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers', 56-57.
[31] R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life* (1957), 268.
[32] S. G. Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939* (1986), 65.
[33] A. Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', in R. Colls, P. Dodd, eds., *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (Beckenham, 1986).
[34] H. J. Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement in England and Wales 1900-1939' (PhD, University of Sussex, 1987).

Wiener, she traces the origins of the mass outdoor movement to the mid-nineteenth-century upper-middle-class walking tradition and argues that an anti-industrial, Arcadian conception of the countryside developed among the intellectual elite during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and gradually permeated the population as a whole, becoming pervasive by 1914.[35] Like Howkins and Lowerson, Walker also links the movement to changing fashions in health and fitness that extolled the virtues of fresh air and sunshine, as opposed to sea- and spa-water.[36] Her thesis highlights the anti-industrialism of intellectuals such as John Ruskin and William Morris, popularised by Robert Blatchford through the Clarion movement, as well as the utopian rural socialism of Edward Carpenter.[37] It identifies the importance of the northern nonconformist radical tradition in promoting a range of progressive causes, including rambling and other forms of 'rational recreation' but, unlike many other historians, Walker also recognises the strength of the outdoor movement in London and the South East.

The neo-romantic argument was further developed by Frank Trentmann in his paper 'Civilisation and its Discontents' (1994), which links both the outdoor movement (broadly defined) and the revival of folk culture to neo-romanticism and anti-modernism – disillusionment with modern civilisation and commercial consumerism – coupled with fears of imperial decline and racial degeneration.[38] Trentmann argues that rambling was a deliberate rejection of the passive consumption of commercialised leisure, such as cinema and spectator sports, in favour of active participation, and claims that rambles were not just journeys into the country, but were also nostalgic recreations of a rural past, remaking the rambler's mental landscape. Whilst acknowledging that few members of the interwar outdoor movement aspired to be part of the sturdy independent peasantry advocated by upper-middle-class rural-revivalists such as Rolf Gardiner and Henry Massingham, Trentmann claims that the experience of drinking pints of beer in a country pub at the end of a walk reinforced the feeling that industrialisation had cut ramblers adrift from their rural roots and community. Many

[35] R. Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford, 1973); M. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (Cambridge, 1981). Also R. J. Moore-Colyer, 'From Great Wen to Toad Hall: Aspects of the Urban-Rural Divide in Inter-War Britain', *RH* 10, 1 (1999), 105-24.

[36] P. Fussell, in *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars* (Oxford, 1980), 138, had previously observed that 'sun worship' was one of the most startling reversals in modern intellectual and emotional history.

[37] R. Blatchford, *Merrie England* (1894). P.C. Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land, and Socialism in Britain 1880-1900* (Brighton, 1988).

[38] F. Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth-Century Western Culture', *JCH* 29, 4 (1994), 583-625. See also G. Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester, 1993).

writers on the outdoor movement admit that they are themselves enthusiastic walkers and the subject is therefore vulnerable to a tendency to project onto others one's own interests and motives. Whilst contemporary accounts provide ample evidence that walkers in the interwar years went to pubs, either during or after a walk, many drank tea rather than beer, and Trentmann produces little tangible evidence to suggest that the experience 'remade their mental landscape'.[39]

Trentmann borrowed the title of his paper from Sigmund Freud, who in 1930 expressed astonishment at the tendency of intellectuals to idealize simple and primitive conditions of life.[40] Rebutting the neo-romantic argument, Peter Mandler makes essentially the same point in his paper *Against 'Englishness': English Culture and the Limits of Rural Nostalgia 1850-1940* (1997), arguing that nostalgia for the rural past was limited to a numerically insignificant intellectual elite: urban life was already established as permanent and normal, family links to the country were few, and the vast majority of the population looked forward to the fruits of continued economic development.[41] Echoing Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, Mandler also claims that, far from being an assertion of 'Englishness', both rambling and the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) were imports from Germany.[42]

Harvey Taylor's book *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement* (1997) currently represents its most comprehensive history.[43] Taylor rejects neo-romantic explanations, claiming that the outdoor movement was rooted in 'open-air fellowship and the rights of free-born Englishmen or the Scottish stravaiging tradition of roaming at will, rather than atavistic romanticism'.[44] He defines the core activity of the 'substantive British outdoor movement' in the interwar years as campaigning for access to open country, arguing that the neo-romantic 'spiritual dimension [of country walking] should not be allowed to submerge the fundamental practical and campaigning functions of collaborative open-air interests'.[45]

[39] Ibid., 593-4.
[40] S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930).
[41] P. Mandler, 'Against "Englishness": English Culture and the Limits of Rural Nostalgia 1850-1940', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997), 155-75.
[42] R. Graves and A. Hodge, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain*, 1971 Penguin ed., 271 (first pubd.1940). Graves and Hodge added sun-bathing and nudism, all of which they characterised as libertarian fashions introduced from Germany.
[43] Like this thesis, Taylor adopts a narrow definition of the 'outdoor movement', focused on strenuous country walking, but also refers to cycling.
[44] See R. Aitkens, 'Stravagers and Marauders', *SMCJ* 30, 166 (1975), 351-57.
[45] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside,* 4, 13.

Taylor acknowledges the influence of the Romantic poets; radical middle-class footpath campaigners; the anti-industrialism of intellectuals such as Ruskin and Morris; and utopian socialism. However, his main argument is that there was continuity between a 'pre-industrial' northern English and Scottish country-walking tradition and the mass outdoor movement. He highlights the importance of upper-working- and lower-middle-class notions of hard-working respectability, 'rational recreation' and self-improvement (previously identified, but not fully explored, by Walker) and traces the dissemination of these ideas through Christian socialism, autodidact naturalists and the Clarion movement, to rambling clubs and the CHA. Despite rejecting neo-romanticism, Taylor agrees with Trentmann that the outdoor movement was a rebellion against consumerism, claiming that it competed with 'a multiplicity of counter attractions, which are largely the product of the twentieth-century commercialization of leisure'.[46]

Taylor's argument is essentially an expansion of Howard Hill's position, backed up by diligent archival research. For reasons set out most clearly by Marion Shoard, and discussed more fully in Chapter 2, Taylor's decision (like Hill) to conflate the outdoor movement and the access campaign causes him to locate 'the earliest roots and much of the subsequent development of the movement…in the industrial areas [of the North] and flourishing more specifically in Lancashire and Yorkshire towns', because restrictions on access to open moorland and mountains were largely confined to the Pennines and Scotland.[47] His book documents the early development of both the outdoor and access movements in the industrial settlements flanking the southern Pennines, and demonstrates that in these regions, at least, neither was primarily an elite cultural phenomenon. However, Taylor largely ignores the rest of the country and, consequently, fails to recognize that the mass outdoor movement was a nationwide phenomenon, unrelated in most regions to the campaign for access to open country.

Few of the academic studies summarised above explicitly address the link between the economic context and the outdoor movement. However, since they nearly all emphasise continuity between the pre- and post-War traditions, implicitly they appear to assume that the urban masses' impulse to walk in the country was only restrained

[46] Ibid., 274.

[47] M. Shoard, *A Right to Roam* (Oxford, 1999),121-27. See also M. Shoard, *The Theft of the Countryside* (1980); *This Land Is Our Land: The Struggle for Britain's Countryside* (1987). H. Taylor, 'The Ideological Evolution of an Outdoor Movement in Britain' (PhD, University of Lancaster, 1993), 4. In 'The Northern Rambler: Recreational Walking and the Popular Politics of Industrial England from Peterloo to the 1930s', *Labour History Review* 78, 3 (2013), 266, John Walton makes a similar assertion: 'Rural walking as a popular activity undertaken for its own sake…was pioneered in the early industrial districts of northern England, especially in and around the Lancashire 'cotton towns' and their West Riding neighbours.'

by poverty. Only Lowerson seriously challenges this assumption, arguing that the 'outpouring to the [northern] hills hardly justifies taking it as a sign of prosperity, despite the recent claims of some historians who appear to have treated it as entirely outside the grim urban context from which it sprang'.[48] The target for Lowerson's criticism was John Stevenson and Chris Cook's revisionist study *The Slump: Society and Politics during the Depression* (1977), which argued that popular images of mass unemployment and hunger marches belie the fact that 'the 1930s had seen a marked improvement in the standard of living and the quality of life of those in work…There were increased opportunities for travel, greater leisure time…Britain was on average better paid, better fed, better clothed and housed, and healthier than it had been in 1918.'[49]

Subsequent research has largely borne out Stevenson and Cook's analysis. In 1986, Stephen Jones investigated the general link between interwar economic indicators and the expansion of commercial leisure.[50] In relation to the age group most relevant to the mass outdoor movement, David Fowler argues that vacancies for juvenile labour exceeded the number of applicants throughout the 1930s, even in depressed areas such as Manchester. This was partly because they were cheaper to employ, but mainly because of the low wartime birth rate, which produced a 25 per cent reduction in the number of juveniles entering the jobs market from 1928 to 1933 (the peak of the hiking craze). As a consequence, wages for young earners in a range of industries increased by between 300 and 500 per cent compared with the pre-War period; youth unemployment averaged just 5 per cent between 1920 and 1939; and young wage-earners typically enjoyed a higher standard of living than other members of their families, retaining part of their earnings for leisure activities. Fowler argues that 'the first teenagers' – a distinct youth culture founded upon the consumption of commercial leisure – emerged in Manchester and other major cities in the 1920s and '30s, largely as a result of increased prosperity within this age group.[51]

Fowler's analysis is supported by several contemporary social surveys. A report by William Temple to the Pilgrim Trust in 1938 noted that the proportion of the population

[48] Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', 268, 279.
[49] J. Stevenson and C. Cook, *The Slump: Society and Politics during the Depression*, 1979 Quartet ed., 30 (first pubd.1977).
[50] Jones, *Workers at Play*, ch. 1 'Demand for Leisure'.
[51] D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (1995), 14-16, 93-95, 170. Fowler's conclusions are challenged by B. Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain 1850-1945* (Manchester, 2005), who argues that the apparent emergence of a 'youth culture' in the interwar years was largely a function of greater awareness by adults. However, his case is not entirely convincing.

who had suffered unemployment for more than one year in 1935 increased with age, from less than 1 per cent for workers aged 18-20 to over 10 per cent for workers aged 60-64.[52] John and Sylvia Jewkes noted that unemployment among school leavers was negligible in most Lancashire towns.[53] Rowntree's second sociological study of York, published in 1941, reached a broadly similar conclusion, reporting that 'young wage-earners invariably enjoyed a standard of living higher than the rest of the family, retaining part of their earnings for holidays, outings and new clothes.'[54] The relative prosperity of youths and young adults was also recognised within the outdoor movement. At a National Council meeting of the YHA held on 10 April 1932, in the depths of the Depression, a motion from the West Riding Regional Group proposed that the annual subscription for members aged between 21 and 25 should be *increased* from 2s 6d to 5s, because 'between the ages of 21 and 25 young people had perhaps more money than at any period of their lives to spend on travel'. The motion was defeated because the Council felt that a higher subscription would deter poorer members.[55]

This thesis takes it as axiomatic that economic factors were a key enabler of the rapid interwar expansion of leisure activities for young men and particularly young women. But economic factors cannot explain *why* they chose to use increased disposable income, shorter working hours, longer holidays and greater mobility to explore the countryside, rather than other leisure activities.

In summary, most historical accounts of the outdoor movement recognise the existence of two separate pre-War traditions: an upper-middle-class intellectual, individualistic, neo-romantic walking tradition; and an upper-working- and lower-middle-class tradition, founded upon hard-working respectability, self-improvement and collective 'open-air fellowship'. However, there is disagreement on the relative size and importance of the two movements both before and after the War. There is also considerable definitional confusion, with historians who favour neo-romantic explanations typically adopting a broad definition of the 'outdoor movement', while researchers and campaigners more interested in the ideological aspects of the

[52] W. Temple, *Men Without Work: A Report made to the Pilgrim Trust* (Cambridge, 1938), 20.

[53] J. Jewkes and S. Jewkes, *The Juvenile Labour Market* (1938), 59-60.

[54] B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York* (1941).

[55] To put this in the context, the weekly budget of Larry Meath, the fictional rambler (in full-time employment) in Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* (1933) was: 'Forty-five bob [£2.25]: ten shillings rent, twenty five shillings food, five shillings coal, gas and insurance; five bob left for clothes, recreation, little luxuries such as smokes...[and] brief holidays...that made the heart ache with their beauty'.

movement adopt a narrow definition, conflating the outdoor movement with the access campaign, thereby introducing a significant regional bias into their analysis. To date, no-one has provided an entirely satisfactory explanation for the dramatic expansion of the movement in the interwar years.

This thesis agrees that both of the pre-War traditions identified in previous historical accounts of the interwar movement remained important, but argues that neither accounts for its dramatic expansion. Instead, it argues that a third, related but independent movement emerged in the mid-1920s that constituted the greater part of the outdoor movement by the early 1930s. As discussed earlier, the verbs 'tramp', 'ramble' and 'hike' are essentially synonyms for undertaking a long country walk. However, by the 1930s, the nouns 'tramper', 'rambler' and 'hiker' had become freighted with assumptions about the age, class, 'respectability' and motives of the walker, and these distinctions provide the key to understanding the interwar expansion of the movement.

At the start of the interwar period, 'tramping' was the preferred term used by upper-middle-class walkers, following in the tradition of Leslie Stephen's 'Sunday Tramps', founded in 1879. In *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (1927), Stephen Graham, an energetic walker and author, conveyed the democratic aspirations and effortless superiority of upper-middle-class trampers:

> It is undoubtedly a delicious moment when Miles the gardener seeing you coming along in tramping rig omits to touch his hat as you pass. Of course it is part of the gentle art not to be offended. It is no small part of the gentle art of tramping to learn to accept the simple and humble role and not to crave respect, honour, obeisance.[56]

Graham's espousal of tramping as a 'classless' activity draws upon a Romantic tradition dating back to Wordsworth's poetic encounters with beggars and vagrants. The use of the word 'tramp' to describe strenuous walking gradually went out of fashion during the Depression, as it came to be associated with unemployed men searching for work. However, as a diehard tramper, Graham maintained that the term was misapplied to the unemployed, since such '"won't works" and parasites of the charitable' were mostly 'poor walkers'.[57]

[56] S. Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (1927), 2.
[57] Ibid., 3.

The term 'rambling' was adopted by 'respectable', mainly upper-working- or lower-middle-class participants in the outdoor movement, but the ideological and demographic connotations of the term evolved over time. Before the War, most self-designated ramblers appear to have been radical and relatively young, but as the twentieth century proceeded the popular image of ramblers became increasingly conservative and elderly. Partly this was a natural consequence of the established clubs' ageing membership, but it also reflected the unnatural generation gap created by the War. Early twentieth-century ramblers tended to start the activity aged between 16 and 20, and many gave it up when they married. The virtual cessation of activities for five years between 1914 and 1919 inevitably meant that pre-War activists who continued into the post-War years were considerably older than the younger generation that became active, after a post-War lull, in the mid-1920s and '30s.

The ageing leaders of many formal rambling clubs in the interwar years continued to uphold Victorian notions of 'rational recreation', encouraging their members to become 'informed' citizens with a knowledge of local history and natural science. They defined themselves in opposition to day-trippers, charabanc parties, motor tourists and latterly 'hikers', who were 'uninformed', frivolous, noisy, indifferent to beauty and drawn to pleasure.[58] In 1928, as the 'hiking craze' gathered momentum, the popular outdoor author and broadcaster S. P. B. Mais wrote a letter to a popular outdoor magazine suggesting that the word 'rambler' no longer seemed appropriate to describe the new youthful fashion for country walking. Subsequent letters suggested bogtrotter, tramper, rover or wanderbird (but not hiker) instead.[59]

The word 'hiking' was in use in Scotland in the nineteenth century and was reintroduced into common usage in Britain, possibly via America, by the popular press in the late 1920s.[60] Robert Graves described it as 'a more ambitious form of rambling'.[61] During the early 1930s, 'hiking' became almost synonymous with the mass outdoor movement, with many journalists putting it in inverted commas to emphasise

[58] See C. Brace, 'A Pleasure Ground for the Noisy Herds? Incompatible Encounters with the Cotswolds and England, 1900-1950', *RH* 11 (2000), 75-94; Matless, 'Art of Right Living'; D. Matless, 'Moral Geographies of English Landscape', *Landscape Research*, 22, 2 (1997), 141-55; B. Anderson, 'The Manchester Ramblers Federation and Rural/Urban Interaction 1926-1936', paper presented at the Urban History Group, 2008.

[59] *OoD*, Mar. 1928, 4; May 1928, 71.'Wanderbird' is a direct translation of *Wandervögel*.

[60] Taylor, 'Ideological Evolution of an Outdoor Movement',169, suggests 1927. However the term was used in the Boy Scout movement before this date and also appeared occasionally in magazines e.g. an article entitled 'A-Hiking We Will Go' appeared in *Open Air* in Oct.1923. Joseph Amato (an American) describes 'hiking' as a 'nineteenth-century English verb…of unknown origin' (Amato, *On Foot*, ch.1, para 7).

[61] Graves and Hodge, *Long Weekend*, 271.

the novelty of the word and, by implication, the activity. Although in popular usage 'rambler' and 'hiker' were to some extent interchangeable, self-styled hikers were drawn almost exclusively from the 'post-War generation', born after 1901. Among older ramblers, there was a strong prejudice against hikers, founded partly upon class and gender (many pre-war rambling clubs were exclusively male, whereas interwar hiking parties were often mixed and sometimes exclusively female), but primarily because of age and perceived lack of respect for the countryside and for their elders. Ramblers also objected to word 'hiker' because of its alleged American origins.

The press soon picked up on the distinction between the attitudes, behaviour and appearance of young and old walkers, often using language anticipating that used to describe the better-known 'generation gap' of the 1960s. An article in the *Birmingham Mail* in 1930 was typical:

> Vagabondage appeals to some deep-seated instinct in human nature…There is a spice of adventure, a return to the primitive…It is this that probably explains why some of our amateur 'hikers' seem to imitate the professional in their get-up and appearance: many of the girls in their shirts and shorts seem to lose all sense of feminine charm, whilst some of the youths would never be admitted to the Boy Scouts troop until well washed and brushed.[62]

While ramblers sought to portray their activity as physically, intellectually, spiritually and morally improving, during the 1930s 'hiking' became associated with noise, litter, rowdy behaviour and immorality. Many conservative rural residents and elderly ramblers clearly felt threatened by the unfamiliar sight of 'hordes' of urban youths 'marauding' through the countryside, and the editor of *Hiker and Camper* confessed in November 1934 that he had repeatedly been approached to change its title, because in England and Wales the word 'hiker' had become 'synonymous with hooliganism'.[63]

Ramblers initially criticised hikers for being lazy, inexperienced, fair-weather walkers.[64] As it became clear that many were extremely fit, often covering long distances over rough terrain in bad weather, they were accused of being obsessed with speed and distance, with no appreciation of the beauty of the countryside. The middle-aged leaders of the Manchester Ramblers' Federation were particularly incensed at the attention hiking received in the popular press:

[62] 'Hostels for Hikers', *Birmingham Mail*, 13 Dec.1930.
[63] *H&C*, Nov.1934, 289.
[64] E.g. 'West Riding Ramblers' Federation Notes', *OoD*, Northern Edition, Oct.1931, 83.

> The year 1931 has been described as the 'hiker's year', and it deserves everything connoted with that detestable word. We have been surfeited *ad nauseum* in the popular press with pictures of hikers displaying their amateurishness, seven of the tribe looking at one map fully spread, hanging in ape-like festoons on (apparently) precipitous crags, moaning – with ukulele distractions – the latest banality…happy hikers, open-air girls, carefree girls, etc. Never has the human knee had such an audience. The R. F. has cursed the word... and this is the only paragraph in this Handbook where it is allowed to exist.[65]

Ukuleles, guitars and accordions commonly appear in accounts criticising hikers. Possibly the association arose in the popular imagination because of the folk-music tradition of the *Wandervögel*, the pre-War German outdoor youth movement, but accounts left by hikers themselves suggest that musical instruments (other than the easily-portable mouth organ) were relatively rare in the British mass outdoor movement. Sing-songs in hostels, campsites, barns, caves and other howffs were ubiquitous, however, and among wealthier hikers and campers, gramophones were also popular, which attracted further criticism from the older generation, partly because of the noise they created but mainly because the preferred music of hikers tended to be 'Negro jazz', rather than English folk songs. Cyril Joad, popular philosopher and radical proponent of 'A Charter for Ramblers' was horrified by the lack of reverence shown by young hikers for the 'deep, deep sleep' of the English countryside:[66]

> Hordes of hikers cackling insanely in the woods, or singing raucous songs as they walk arm in arm at midnight down the quiet village street…There are tents in meadows and girls in pyjamas dancing beside them to the strains of the gramophone, while stinking disorderly dumps of tins, bags and cartons bear witness to the tide of invasion for weeks after it has ebbed; there are fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties and plus-fours, and a roadhouse round every corner and a café on every hill for their accommodation.[67]

At the height of the hiking craze in 1931, Sir Charles Trevelyan MP urged a return to the word 'tramper', which 'conveyed a little more than "rambler" and was certainly not as objectionable as "hiker"', while Alfred Brown expressed the hope that hikers, in their 'garish costume', including 'ladies [who] have cast convention to the winds and

[65] *M&DRFH* (1932), 10.
[66] See C. E. M. Joad, *A Charter for Ramblers: The Future of the Countryside* (1934).
[67] C. E. M. Joad, 'The People's Claim', in C. Williams-Ellis, ed., *Britain and the Beast* (London: J. M. Dent, 1937), 72.

returned to nature in too big a hurry', would 'get over their growing pains and develop into real ramblers and trampers in time'.[68] As late as 1939, *The Times* contrasted hikers – 'a mob of young men and women – hatless, raucous, yellow-jerseyed, slung with concertinas' – with the genuine rambler 'who goes about in twos or threes and not in hordes'.[69]

The consternation that this noisy, colourful, urban youth movement provoked among a conservative older generation of country landowners was captured by Anthony Powell in his comedy of English rural life *From a View to a Death* (1933), in which Mr Passenger, patriarch of a long-established landowning family, comes upon a group of hikers crossing his land:

> The figures revealed themselves as men and women, though which were which it was not easy to infer as both dressed in shorts and bright coloured shirts without distinction as to sex. One at least had side-whiskers and one of the more uncompromising female members of the party wore plus-fours. The words they were singing could now be distinguished.
>
> *Bonny was a warrior!*
>
> *Ho! Hi! Ho!*
>
> Mr. Passenger said: 'Here, I say, what's all this?'
>
> 'Hikers.'
>
> 'Hikers?' said Mr. Passenger. '*Hikaz*?'[70]

Ramblers and hikers are stock figures in interwar literature, spanning the social spectrum. Larry Meath, in Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole* (1933), was a working-class, Marxist, autodidact;[71] Mark Rampton (possibly based on D. H. Lawrence), in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928), was an ambitious scholarship boy from Sheffield, who proudly confessed to 'poaching your view' when caught trespassing on the moors by the landowners;[72] Mr Finchley in Victor Canning's *Mr. Finchley Discovers His England* (1934) was one of many fictional downtrodden clerks, who rediscovered the freedom of the open road;[73] while Mr Lucton, in Francis Brett Young's *Mr. Lucton's Freedom* (1941), was a successful, middle-aged

[68] *OoD*, July 1931, 163; A. J. Brown, *Moorland Tramping in West Yorkshire* (1931), 1-2.
[69] *The Times*, 7 Mar. 1939.
[70] A. Powell, *From a View to a Death*, 1992 Mandarin ed., 101 (first pubd.1933).
[71] W. Greenwood, *Love on the Dole* (1933).
[72] A. Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 2004 Vintage ed., 131 (first pubd.1928).
[73] V. Canning, *Mr Finchley Discovers His England* (1934). In 'Ruralism, Masculinity and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction 1900-1940', *Journal of British Studies* 54, 3 (2015), 654-78, Nicola Bishop identifies a whole genre of 'rambling clerk' literature.

professional, who ran away from his wife, his butler and his large house, and went hiking through the Shropshire hills.[74] Hikers also appear in poetry and songs. W. H. Auden celebrated the 'Hiker with sunburnt blisters on your office pallor';[75] while Albert Whelan had a popular hit with 'I'm happy when I'm hiking', recorded in 1931, which was adopted as the anthem of the National Hiker's League, a 'press stunt' promoted by the *Daily Herald*:

> I'm happy when I'm hiking, pack upon my back.
> I'm happy when I'm hiking, off the beaten track.
> Out in the open country, that's the place for me
> With a real good friend, to the journeys end,
> Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty miles a day.[76]

Hiking also became associated in the popular imagination with a range of other fashionable, 'progressive' and socialist ideals. Gordon Comstock, the anti-hero of George Orwell's *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), imagined socialism as being 'some kind of Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*; only not so amusing. Four hours a day in a model factory…Community-hikes from Marx Hostel to Lenin Hostel and back.'[77] Orwell placed shorts-wearing socialist hikers in the same social category as the 'fruit juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex maniac, Quaker, "Nature Cure" quack, pacifist, and feminist',[78] while Huxley mocked middle-class 'back-to-the-land' idealism in his short story 'The Claxtons', in which the anti-hero, Herbert (who met his heiress wife through Morris dancing) signalled his spiritual superiority by wearing an open-necked shirt and carrying 'that outward and visible symbol of inward grace', the rucksack.[79]

The word 'progressive' was used almost indiscriminately in the interwar years to describe any rejection of Victorian traditions, values or social mores. Fresh air, exercise, vegetarianism, 'rational' clothing (such as shorts and open-necked, 'aertex' shirts), water-bathing, sun-bathing, nudism (sometimes referred to as air-bathing) and sex were all 'progressive'. So too was hiking. For the post-War generation of hikers, the appeal of the countryside was not nostalgic; it was emphatically modern. When J. B. Priestley tried to summarise post-War England in *English Journey* (1934) he described it as an

[74] F. Brett Young, *Mr. Lucton's Freedom* (1941). See also 'Stanley Baldwin and Francis Brett Young' in D. Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow: Confronting the Past in Modern Britain* (2002), ch.7.
[75] W. H. Auden, 'The Dog Beneath the Skin' in E. Mendelson, ed., *W. H. Auden Selected Poems* (1979), 41 (first pubd. 1934).
[76] Imperial Records, 1931.
[77] G. Orwell, *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, 1977 Penguin ed., 95 (first pubd.1936).
[78] G. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 1962 Penguin ed., 152 (first pubd.1937).
[79] In A. Huxley, *Brief Candles*, 1984 Panther ed., 86 (first pubd.1930).

> England of arterial and by-pass roads, of filling stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinemas and dance-halls and cafés, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, Woolworths, motor-coaches, wireless, *hiking*, factory girls looking like actresses, grey-hound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools, and everything given away for cigarette coupons.[80]

As Matless points out, during the period from 1918 to the 1950s, there was 'a powerful…connection between landscape, Englishness and the modern'.[81]

While members of the general public may have used the words 'tramper', 'rambler' and 'hiker' more-or-less interchangeably (and the word 'hiker' was not commonly used in Manchester, even by the post-War generation[82]), the social and cultural distinctions described above were known and understood within the interwar outdoor movement.[83] Tramping and rambling were essentially a continuation of two distinct pre-War traditions. Hiking was new. It was emblematic of a self-confident, newly-empowered younger generation. In a 1931 article entitled 'The Hiker's Charter', Commander J. M. Kenworthy, MP wrote: 'One of the most remarkable movements of our time is the growth of hiking…It is an expression of untrammelled youth breaking with the past and facing the future.' Denying that it was 'a mere craze for exercise and fresh air', Kenworthy characterised hiking as 'a revolt against the artificial conditions and restrictions of life in over-crowded, grimy noisy cities; a throwing off of obsolete conventions, rules and regulations.[84]

Given the widespread contemporary recognition of hiking as a new social and cultural phenomenon, representing a radical break with the past, why do most histories of the outdoor movement emphasise continuity with one of the two pre-War traditions?

In 1912, the essayist Arthur Sidgwick observed that

> walking being above all things human and intimate, is naturally neglected by historians: it cannot be shown to have caused any political convulsions, or to have any economic effects…If we want to know whether men walked in the

[80] J. B. Priestley, *English Journey*, 2009 Great Northern ed., 337 (first pubd.1934). (My emphasis).
[81] D. Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (1998), 16.
[82] Possibly because of the influence of the *Manchester Guardian*, whose leader writer (Charles Montague) and outdoor correspondent (Patrick Monkhouse) were both 'trampers', whereas many outdoor correspondents in the regional press were relatively young 'hikers'.
[83] Where no social or cultural distinction is intended in this thesis, the neutral term 'walker' is used.
[84] *OoD,* Feb. 1931, 30.

> past, and…in what spirit and with what object they walked, we must turn to literature.[85]

A more recent cultural history of walking has described it as 'an unwritten, secret history whose fragments can be found in a thousand unemphatic passages in books'.[86] But as Thomas points out, literature is only a guide to the thoughts and feelings of the more articulate sections of the population.[87] Prior to the War, the literary record of walking was largely written by wealthy, well-educated men, giving rise to the almost certainly mistaken belief that walking for pleasure was overwhelmingly an activity undertaken by the wealthy, well-educated and literary. Perhaps less obviously, the historical record is also distorted because accounts of walking were typically only considered worthy of publication, even by the more articulate sections of society, when the activity served some other purpose: to explore a little-known region; to 'conquer' an unclimbed mountain; to study science or history; as a means of improving the lives of the young or the poor; or as an act of political protest. Simply 'going for a walk' – for exercise, recreation, as a social act – rarely merited a mention.

A further problem is that accounts of the institutions linked to the outdoor movement almost invariably focus on the leaders' intentions, while ignoring the motivations and experiences of members, which may have been quite different. As Gareth Stedman Jones observes, much of the history of leisure in general is concerned with 'puritan, Methodist and evangelical reformers, gentry…prescient magistrates, calculating employers, prurient municipal elites [and] rationalising merchants of leisure', while in the background 'we can just make out the blurred and rather undifferentiated features of the rural and urban masses'.[88] In *Mundane Mobilities, Banal Travels* (2007), Jon Binnie and others draw attention to the same problem in the study of travel by cultural geographers: 'This focus on the…outstanding event highlights a broader distortion…that tends towards the notable rather than the mundane.'[89] And the whole point about walking for pleasure, for most people, most of the time, is that it is mundane.

The hypothesis tested by this thesis is that past studies give undue weight to the literary record left by middle-aged, middle-class intellectuals, social reformers and

[85] A. H. Sidgwick, *Walking Essays* (1912),181-83.
[86] R. Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 2002 edn, (2001), 3.
[87] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 16.
[88] G. S. Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control?' *History Workshop Journal* , 4 (1977), 163.
[89] J. Binnie, T. Edensor, J. Holloway, S. Millington and C. Young, 'Mundane Mobilities, Banal Travels', *Social and Cultural Geography* 8, 2 (2007), 166.

leaders of youth groups, holiday associations and ramblers' federations – many of whom were steeped in the pre-War traditions – or equally exceptional working-class autodidacts and access campaigners. Meanwhile, the less articulate members of associations linked to the outdoors, and the vastly greater number of unaffiliated walkers, have been ignored. And by privileging the exceptional over the everyday, past studies obscure the social and cultural origins of the mass outdoor movement.

This thesis is based upon an unprovable proposition: that children have always explored on foot the area around their homes, whether rural or urban, and as they grow older, the more adventurous, curious and energetic stray further afield, in company with other 'youths' of similar age and inclination, beyond the supervision of parents and neighbours.[90] Where moral and cultural norms permit, they also 'walk out' with members of the opposite sex. Walking serves many purposes, but previous studies of the outdoor movement have neglected its role as a means of creating a social space where youths interact beyond the supervision of adults.[91] Eric Hobsbawm recognised that rambling represented 'the creation of a social space outside the control of the powerful and rich'.[92] He failed to recognise that, for the young, even poor adults are powerful. This universal desire on the part of young people to seek out a private social space, coalesced into a recognisably distinct strand of the outdoor movement because of the particular economic, social and cultural circumstances that existed during the interwar years.

At a time when houses were often small and overcrowded; urban parks were formal places where people strolled in their 'Sunday best'; street corners were increasingly noisy and choked with motor traffic; and commercial leisure facilities catering to the young, such as cinemas and dance halls, were closed on Sundays (the only full day off work for most people), the countryside provided a space where urban youths of both sexes could enjoy a high degree of individual and collective freedom.[93] Moreover, because the Victorian notion of 'rational recreation' had established country walking as

[90] See S. Sleight, 'Rites of Passage: Youthful Walking and the Rhythms of the City 1850-1914', in C. Bryant, A. Burns, and P. Readman, eds., *Walking Histories 1800-1914* (2016). 'Youth' is a flexible term. The American psychologist G. Stanley Hall first popularised the idea of 'adolescence' as a separate stage of development in 1904. Hall argued that adolescence extended from 12 to 21 in girls and from 14 to 25 in boys. During the interwar period, 'youth' loosely described the life stage from leaving school to getting married. The minimum school leaving age was 14 and the average age of marriage was 25 for women and 27 for men in 1931 i.e. 'youth' in the interwar period typically described a longer period of time than today. This thesis adopts the same definition as the YHA in the 1930s, treating both males and females aged 18-25 as 'youths', while the younger age group of 14-18 are referred to as 'juveniles'.

[91] See H. Lefebrve, *The Production of Space* (1974).

[92] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour* (1984),191.

[93] See Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 48.

healthy, respectable and improving, many influential adults actively encouraged the growth of an outdoor youth movement. In 1936, George Trevelyan, the first president of the YHA, observed that 'in these days young men and women cannot be denied each other's company, and [youth hostels] are the very best and most healthy conditions under which they can enjoy it.'[94] In *The Classic Slum* (1980), Robert Roberts observed that 'walking in the countryside became for the first time a widespread attraction…Young men and women in pairs, groups and droves went "rambling"…There was less parental supervision…Never before had the children of the people tasted such freedom, and didn't they take some advantage of it?'[95]

While many pre-War traditions undoubtedly continued into the interwar years, this thesis argues that the War represented a major disjunction in the history of the outdoor movement, as many contemporary observers recognised. By accelerating trends already discernible in the early twentieth century, the War helped to create the economic, social and cultural conditions within which a distinctive youth culture might emerge. More importantly, it created 'generation-consciousness' among the 'post-War' generation who were too young to serve, partly in response to the defining and exclusive experience of the 'War generation' and partly because of the unnatural generation gap created in many institutions (including outdoor clubs) by 'the lost generation'. Many pre-War clubs became old, cliquey and moribund, and most young participants in the mass outdoor movement had little knowledge of or social contact with them. As Sandy Wedderburn observed in the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* in 1939, the young hikers and climbers who went into the hills in the interwar years were 'not so much heirs to a tradition as the discoverers of a secret hitherto kept from their class'.[96]

The academic pre-occupation with rural nostalgia, neo-romanticism and 'pre-industrial' explanations for the origins of the movement has also obscured the existence of an *urban* walking tradition. As the growth of suburbs progressively cut off many working people from easy access to the countryside, their children did not stop walking. Instead, they 'hiked' through city streets in search of open spaces – urban parks, cemeteries, derelict sites and canals are all mentioned in contemporary accounts – where they would be free from adult supervision, often walking considerable distances

[94] *YHAR* (1936), 4, 3, 49.
[95] R. Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (Harmondsworth, 1980), 237. Note the use of 'rambling' in the Manchester area.
[96] E. A. M. Wedderburn, 'A Short History of Scottish Climbing from 1918 to the Present Day', *SMCJ* XXII, 127 (1939), 107.

in the process.[97] Even at the height of the hiking craze, many walking groups continued to meet in an urban setting during the winter months, when inclement weather discouraged the more social aspects of walking in the country, thereby demonstrating that the *social* function of walking is not dependent upon bucolic surroundings. In a study of adolescent leisure in a working-class district of Manchester in the 1930s, H. James and F. Moore included an activity which they labelled 'talk'. 'Talk' included 'walking in a group, irrespective of whether the group is mixed or not, in the street, in a park…In this category is included a great deal of sex activity.' They noted that 'a hummocky stretch of waste land left by a recent "slum-clearance" scheme is much used'. 'Talk' occupied 30-40 per cent of the leisure time of working adolescents and was by far the largest single category (followed by cinema at 20-25 per cent).[98] As John Springhall observed: 'Since the industrial revolution and the growth of large cities, the streets have always provided the main arena for the relaxation of urban youth', and the need for apparently purposive walking was perhaps even greater in an urban setting, where any tendency on the part of youths to 'loiter' might attract the attention of adult authority.[99]

Far from being a nostalgic re-creation of a rural past, the mass outdoor movement was, in part, an adaptation of the activities of single-sex urban street gangs and the 'monkey parade', where youths of both sexes promenaded on city streets.[100] Rebecca Solnit claims that country walking is motivated by the 'moral imperative in the love of nature'. In contrast, she describes urban walking as a 'shadier business, easily turning into soliciting, cruising, promenading…rioting, protesting'.[101] Her characterisation of country walking may have been true for some trampers and ramblers, but hiking's

[97] See M. Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester, 2012); C. Cameron, A. Lush, and G. Meara, *Disinherited Youth* (Edinburgh, 1943), 107. Working class autobiographies and oral histories contain numerous references to long city walks e.g. H. Watkin, *From Hulme All Blessings Flow* (Manchester, 1985), 43; R. Hoggart, *A Local Habituation: Life and Times 1918-40* (Oxford, 1989), 39; P. Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (1975), 177; and NWSA, Tape 585, WCMA.

[98] H. E. O. James and F. T. Moore, 'Adolescent Leisure in a Working Class District', *Occupational Psychology* XIV, 3 (1940), 134-39.

[99] J. Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Dublin, 1986), 139. S. Sleight, *Young People and the Shaping of Public Space in Melbourne 1870-1914* (2013); Sleight, 'Rites of Passage'; S. Humphries, *Hooligans Or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (1981); G. Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (1983).

[100] A. Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working Class Culture in Manchester and Salford 1900-1939* (Buckingham,1992), 83; C. Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England 1920-60* (Manchester, 2000), 118-19; J. R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations* (New York, 1974), 72.

[101] Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 173.

social and cultural roots also tapped into the 'shadier' aspects of urban walking.[102] None of this implies that, having discovered the countryside, young people in the interwar years were immune to its beauty. Indeed, for many, it was a revelation. But the main attraction that initially took them there was not neo-romantic nostalgia; it was freedom, adventure and companionship.

Previous studies that have rejected neo-romantic explanations for the outdoor movement, including Taylor's comprehensive study, tend instead to define its core activity as campaigning for access. This thesis will show that the vast majority of participants in the movement were not politically active, did not join formal rambling clubs, and took no part whatsoever in access campaigns or any other collective action. Young hikers nevertheless considered themselves part of a new social movement, and a defining characteristic of that movement was youth. One of the few historians previously to have highlighted this aspect of the outdoor movement was Richard Holt, in *Sport and the British* (1989):

> So much has been written about the Depression that the excitement and liberation of youth, which was as important in its own way as the better-known 'youth culture' of the 1960s, is sometimes overlooked…Trips to the country, hiking, swimming, popular music on the radio, weekly visits to the new dance halls and cinemas were open to the unmarried.[103]

However, Holt did not pursue his insight. Instead, he simply restated the prevailing neo-romantic orthodoxy: 'Suddenly educated working-men were espousing the kind of romantic anti-urbanism that had first captured the hearts of the middle classes at the end of the nineteenth century.'[104]

Historians of the outdoor movement have failed to recognise the significance of the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, founded in 1906 and 1910 respectively. During the interwar years, both organizations introduced large numbers of mainly upper-working and lower-middle-class juveniles to camping and hiking, while simultaneously and unintentionally encouraging the creation of social peer groups stratified by age.[105] Both the Scouts and the Guides struggled to retain members beyond the age of 14 or 15,

[102] B. Anderson, 'A Liberal Countryside? The Manchester Ramblers' Federation and the "Social Readjustment" of Urban Citizens, 1929-1936', *Urban History* 1 (2011), 84-102.
[103] R. Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford, 1989), 198.
[104] Ibid., 200.
[105] J. Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914*, 1994 ed., 166 (first pubd. 1993), argues that the division of groups, such as the Scouts, according to age had 'long-term unintended consequences for social stratification'.

but while older members may have lost interest in adult-supervised, single-sex leisure activities, many retained an enthusiasm for hiking and camping. Enabled by the experience they had gained within the Scouts and Guides, groups of youths of both sexes started to explore the countryside, and this informal and dispersed activity coalesced into a self-conscious social movement as result of mass literacy, mass media and mass transportation. Two decades before the appearance of 'Teddy Boys' and 'Mods' – the first widely-acknowledged expressions of mass youth culture in Britain – hikers adopted their own distinctive dress and behavioural conventions. Their sense of belonging to a new movement was reinforced by the ritual of gathering at stations early on Sunday mornings, the crowded camaraderie of the special excursion trains laid on by railway companies, mass singing, and an unofficial 'uniform' of khaki shorts and brightly coloured shirts, jumpers, scarves and berets, that invited ridicule from 'outsiders'.

The YHA, created in 1930 in response to the hiking craze, may have been conceived by the older trampers and ramblers that presided over it as a means of harnessing and directing the energies of this new movement, but within the hostels the culture was emphatically youthful. Writing in 1939, Alastair Borthwick described youth hostels in the early 1930s as

> a young world, governed by the young. I was twenty at the time, and most of the people I met were my own age; people who, like myself, had only recently discovered that they could leave city, class, and the orthodoxy of elders behind them at week-ends and create their own lives for a day and a half a week beyond the influence of these things.[106]

During the interwar years, age, rather than class or gender, became the main determinant of attitudes to, and usage of the country. A visitor to Winchester Youth Hostel in 1933 recorded that his fellow guests included

> a German lad from the Harz Mountains, university students, public school boys, scouts, boys from the East End, girl cyclists from Kent, musicians, clerks, shop-assistants, errand boys, factory hands. The majority ranged from sixteen to twenty five in age.[107]

It is hard to think of many other social settings in the 1930s where people from this range of backgrounds would have voluntarily met and interacted on equal terms.

[106] A. Borthwick, *Always a Little Further* (1939), 57.
[107] O. Coburn, *Youth Hostel Story* (1950), 36.

The increasing popularity of country walking led to a proliferation of media coverage, which in turn attracted more participants and helped to transform an informal and dispersed activity into a recognisable and self-conscious movement. This sudden increase in written, oral and film records also makes the interwar period the first in history where it is possible to investigate the experiences and motivations of ordinary walkers, of both sexes, and from all social backgrounds. What emerges is a mundane history of a movement that was youthful, gregarious, boisterous, but essentially apolitical and escapist. While many young hikers were certainly idealistic, the movement lacked a core political ideology and much of its appeal consisted of 'getting away from it all'. Hiking was an escape from home, work and adult authority, and from the politics and economics of an uncertain age. But despite its essentially apolitical character, the mass outdoor movement played an influential role in shaping popular attitudes to, and usage, of the countryside. Hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of young people went hiking during the interwar years. Most did not get a chance to vote in a general election until 1945, when many voted for a government that was committed to a programme of town and country planning that increased both access to and preservation of the country. The effects of the mass outdoor movement are therefore still evident today: shaping our aesthetic appreciation of the British landscape; transforming the rural economy in many regions; and defining our cultural conception of the countryside.[108]

* * *

This thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 examines the social and cultural context of the mass outdoor movement, and how evolving relations between generations, classes and genders shaped its development in the post-War years. Chapters 3 and 4 investigate how these changes influenced the two continuing pre-War strands of the outdoor movement – the upper-middle-class tramping movement, and upper-working- and lower-middle-class rambling movement. Both chapters identify continuities and discontinuities between the pre- and post-War years; estimate the number and demographics of participants; examine their attitudes to and usage of the countryside; and evaluate the influence of the two pre-War strands on the development of the mass

[108] The non-hyphenated word 'countryside' first appeared during the interwar years as a generic term for the non-urban parts of Britain. In an article entitled 'Country or Countryside?' (17 June 1939, 639), *Country Life* maintained that the word was only used by townspeople. Unlike the 'country', it was essentially a social and cultural construct – an expression of the urban experience of rural areas as an amenity to be accessed and, in some cases, preserved for leisure activities. See C. V. J. Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside: The Politics of Rural Britain 1918-1939* (Oxford, 2007), 5; Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*,12, 14.

outdoor movement. Chapter 3 also examines the preservation movement, which formed an integral part of the pre-War upper-middle-class neo-romantic outdoor tradition, while Chapter 4 discusses the campaign for access to open country, which was championed by the rambling movement during the interwar years. Having established that neither the tramping nor the rambling tradition can account for the dramatic expansion of the movement in the late-1920s, Chapter 5 investigates the origins of the 'hiking craze' and the demographics and culture of the mass outdoor movement that evolved from it. Chapter 6 investigates the YHA, the main institutional achievement of the interwar mass outdoor movement and a remarkable, largely voluntary, collaboration between all three major strands of the movement. The concluding chapter discusses the legacy of the mass outdoor movement.

A project like this poses some specific evidential challenges. Upper-middle-class trampers and mountaineers left ample literary records of their thoughts and deeds, many held in the Alpine Club library and archives. A comprehensive review of the archives of the main preservation societies, holiday associations, the ramblers' association and selected rambling clubs also yielded a good documentary record of the opinions and values of the more articulate members and leaders of these associations. In researching the rambling movement, I deliberately focused on its development in regions such as London, Birmingham and Merseyside that have been neglected in previous studies of the movement, but also reviewed material from more recognised sources, such as the Working Class Movement and Local Studies Libraries in Manchester and Sheffield respectively.

As E. P. Thompson observed, 'the inarticulate, by definition, leave few records of their thoughts'.[109] The major challenge of the thesis was therefore to determine the age, class, gender and values of participants in the 'hiking craze'. As this thesis will show, most hikers were not affiliated to formal clubs or associations. Instead, they went into the country in informal groups that formed and dissolved according to the individual enthusiasm of their members and, in most cases, kept no records. The culture and values of the silent majority of participants in the movement must therefore be deduced from relatively rare references in biographies, autobiographies and oral histories, as well as from the effect that their presence had on the recorded thoughts of other, more articulate, individuals. The latter require careful interpretation, however, since most participants in the movement were young, while many of the commentators were old. As James and Moore observed in 1940, in most accounts of the leisure activities of

[109] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966), 55.

youth in the first half of the twentieth century, 'what is supposed to happen and what ought to happen…far too often deputize for accurate knowledge of what does happen'.[110]

The YHA and SYHA, established in 1930 and 1931 respectively, in response to the hiking craze, provide the best sources of information on the subsequent development of the mass outdoor movement, but cannot tell us about its origins. Furthermore, membership of these associations was not representative of the movement as a whole, because of cost. Contemporary social surveys provided an unexpectedly rich source of demographic data on the outdoor movement, because many studies conducted during the Depression were concerned with the twin problems of youth and unemployment. Oral histories yielded a few important individual accounts of the movement, but their voluminous and discursive nature, coupled, in many cases, with inadequate indexing, meant that they provided a less accessible resource than originally anticipated. The contemporary outdoor press proved to be more valuable.[111] As discussed in Chapter 5, the thesis draws some general conclusions based upon the specific case of the Woodcraft Folk, one of the few manifestations of the mass outdoor movement where the (young) leaders and members left significant documentary records of their philosophy and activities, now contained in the Youth Movement Archives. Sidgwick and Solnit both recognised that minor details in imaginative literature – 'unemphatic passages' describing the mundane activity of going for a walk – might provide a more authentic guide to the thoughts and feelings of the majority of walkers than the campaign literature, press and journal articles, guide books, self-serving autobiographies and polemics written by preservationists, social reformers, youth group leaders and access campaigners. Accordingly, this thesis makes extensive use of quotes from interwar novels, plays, short stories and poems, whilst acknowledging the limitations of imaginative literature as an historical source.

By drawing upon this broad range of sources, the thesis highlights a number of previously unrecognised facets of the outdoor movement. While the tramping and rambling traditions continued to be influential in the interwar period, particularly in relation to the preservation and access movements, neither of them can account for the dramatic expansion of the outdoor movement in the early 1930s. Reinterpreting the 'hiking craze', and the mass outdoor movement that evolved from it, as an early manifestation of mass youth culture sheds new light on changing attitudes to, and

[110] James and Moore, 'Adolescent Leisure', 132.
[111] See pages 40-2 and 207-9.

usage of the country, as well as providing fresh insights into evolving social relations between generations, classes and genders during the interwar years.

Chapter 2

The Social and Cultural Context

Illustration 2: 'Hike for Health' (1931), Anonymous, Southern Railway poster.

This chapter examines the social and cultural context for the development of the mass outdoor movement, and investigates how changing relations between generations, classes and genders influenced attitudes to and usage of the countryside during the interwar years. It is divided into four sections – age, class, gender and region – but many of the themes, such as changing patterns of employment and social mobility, suburbanisation, and the role of mass media, inevitably overlap and cross-cut these broad demographic categories.

Age

One of the main hypotheses tested by this thesis is that the 'hiking craze' was a youth movement; a response to the particular set of social and cultural conditions experienced by young people born during the first two decades of the twentieth century. At the level of individual families, generations are distinct, but across society as a whole, in normal circumstances, one 'generation' (or more properly 'birth cohort', consisting of people born between specified dates) merges imperceptibly into the next. It is only within societies experiencing rapid change or major discontinuities that significant differences can arise in the experiences of groups of individuals born just a few years apart, creating a self-conscious awareness of belonging to a particular 'social generation'.[1] Samuel Hynes argues that the First World War created just such a 'sense of radical discontinuity… between generations, between fighting soldiers and those who controlled their lives, between the present and the past'.[2]

The expression the 'lost generation', attributed to Gertrude Stein, acquired two meanings during the interwar years: first, the men who died in the War; and second, the men who survived, cast adrift in a world changed beyond recognition.[3] Whatever the demographics may show, the 'lost generation' was a dominant trope throughout the interwar period, with the strong implication that 'the best' had died. In 1936, Winifred Holtby lamented the 'ten million men...who should now have been between forty and fifty five – our scientists, our rulers, our philosophers, the foremen in our workshops, the headmasters in our schools...the world was ill without them'.[4] In 1940, Malcolm Muggeridge described Britain in the 1930s as 'mourning for the living and looking for strength to the dead'.[5] Likewise, whatever the reality, the perception that the War had changed everything was widespread. In *Ends and Means*, Aldous Huxley argued that 'war, if it is fought on a large scale, destroys more than the lives of individual men and women; it shakes the whole fabric of custom, of law, of mutual confidence'.[6] For many people living during the interwar years, the War split history into 'before' and 'after' and divided British society into two social generations: those born before 1901; and those born after, who were too young to serve, or to be complicit in what had occurred.

[1] H. Butterfield, *Discontinuities between Generations in History* (Cambridge, 1972). See I. Jones, *The Local Church and Generational Change in Birmingham 1945-2000* (Woodbridge, 2012), 15-21 for a discussion of 'generations'.
[2] S. Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*, 1992 Pimlico ed., ix-x (first pubd.1990).
[3] From the front piece to E. Hemingway, *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* (1927).
[4] W. Holtby, *South Riding*, 1988 Virago ed., 71 (first pubd.1936).
[5] M. Muggeridge, *The Thirties 1930-1940 in Great Britain* (1940), 318.
[6] A. Huxley, *Ends and Means* (1942), 17.

One visible consequence of the 'lost generation' was that Britain continued to be ruled by old men. Half the MPs serving in 1939 had been MPs in 1914, despite the dramatic social changes that had taken place.[7] The same applied to the outdoor movement: the 'senior' mountaineering clubs, preservation societies, ramblers' federations, holiday associations and adult-led youth movements continued to be led by people brought up in the Victorian era. Throughout this thesis, the date of birth of the principal actors is given to underline the argument that, while the 'post-War generation', born after 1901, made up the overwhelming majority of the mass outdoor movement, most academic studies have relied upon accounts left by people in leadership positions, born at least a decade before 1901.

The War also changed the relationship between leaders and led. Post-War, a more sceptical population questioned not only the motives of their leaders but also, more damagingly, their competence. Many returning soldiers regarded almost all authority figures – staff officers, politicians, pastors, newspaper editors – as hypocritical, wasteful, inefficient, arrogant and out of touch.[8] 'The war', as Orwell (born 1903) observed, 'had been conducted mainly by old men and it had been conducted with supreme incompetence'.[9] The 'death of deference' accelerated as a newly empowered and self-confident post-War generation emerged; 'for the first time, well fed, and with good feeding came health and a new chance for the coming generations', as the Liberal politician Charles Masterman observed in 1922.[10] Arthur Marwick argues that these developments 'marked the beginning of the trend leading to the affluent teenager of the 1960s'.[11]

Siegfried Sassoon (born 1886) observed that those who had served during the War were 'everlastingly differentiated from everyone except…fellow soldiers', while Vera Brittain (born 1893) noted that the 'acute misunderstanding which embittered the relations of the War generation and its immediate juniors' was 'perhaps inevitable whenever one group has been through some profound experience that another has missed'.[12] The post-War generation was equally aware of their exclusion from the defining experience of the War generation. Orwell noted that 'my particular generation,

[7] C.L. Mowat , *Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940*, 1968 ed., 9 (first pubd.1955); A. H. Halsey, ed., *Trends in British Society Since 1900* (1972), 247; A. Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (1965), 264, 310.
[8] C.E. Montague, *Disenchantment*, 1934 Phoenix Library ed., 91-92 (1922).
[9] Orwell, *Road to Wigan Pier*, 121.
[10] C.F.G. Masterman, *England After War: A Study* (1922),123-24.
[11] Marwick, *Deluge*, 9, 118.
[12] S. Sassoon, *Memoires of an Infantry Officer*, 1965 ed., 171 (first pubd.1930); V. Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, 2010 Virago ed., 447 (first pubd.1933).

those who had been "just too young", became conscious of the vastness of the experience they had missed.'[13] Graham Greene (born 1904) observed in 1935 that even the innocent pursuit of pleasure revealed the absence of shared experience: 'The more he drank, the further back he plunged in time. His slang began the evening bright and hollow with the immediate post-war years, but soon it dripped with the mud of trenches.'[14] In a book describing his education during the 1920s, Christopher Isherwood (born 1904) recalled that 'the Sixth [Form] was still composed of boys who had only just missed being conscripted, potential infantry officers trained to expect the brief violent career of the trenches…Now, suddenly, the universal profession of soldiering was closed to them; and the alternatives seemed vague and dull.' For an entire generation, the fact that they had been 'just too young' was both a blessing and a rebuke: 'Like most of my generation, I was obsessed by a complex of terrors and longings connected with the idea "War".'[15]

In response to this vast gulf of experience, those born after 1901 developed a strong sense of 'generation-consciousness', which was both an acknowledgement of the unique experience of the War-generation and an expression of their determination to create their own distinct identity. Inevitably, most accounts of the emerging generation gap come from the intellectual elite, but Melanie Tebbutt argues that by writing about the grievances of youth, young intellectuals helped to shape a more general opposition between 'young' and 'old', while Adrian Bingham points out that the practice adopted by the popular press during the interwar years of employing young spokesmen or women to speak on behalf of 'their generation' helped to reinforce the impression of 'a nation stratified by age'.[16]

In his study of adolescence, Springhall quotes a Teddy Boy talking about the experience of growing up soon after the Second World War: 'It seemed to be somehow that the [Second World] war was over and we'd missed out on it, and yet it was still going on, if you know what I mean. It was in the atmosphere all the time.'[17] Springhall argues that this sense of exclusion played a role in the formation of a distinctive youth culture in the 1950s. But, as Davis and Fowler have pointed out, while the recognition of youth culture by society as a whole did not occur until after the Second World War, many characteristics that we now associate with it began to appear in the interwar

[13] G. Orwell, *My Country Right or Left* (1940), 2-3.
[14] G. Greene, *England Made Me*, 2006 Vintage ed., 31 (first pubd.1935).
[15] C. Isherwood, *Lions and Shadows: An Education in the Twenties* (1938), 8, 47.
[16] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, 44, 17; A. Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 59.
[17] Springhall, *Coming of Age*, 200.

years.[18] Jose Harris argues that, even before the War, generational cohesion was being affected by demographic changes: 'The combination of later marriages, fewer children…meant that families spanned a wider range of age… with a consequent growth in age stratification and formation of social peer groups outside the home.'[19] In 1952, Karl Mannheim defined the pre-War German youth movement as a number of cliques 'with the one distinguishing characteristic that group-formation is based upon the consciousness of belonging to one generation'.[20] In Britain, the mundane act of walking in the country was transformed into a self-conscious youth movement during the interwar years, in part, because of 'generation-consciousness' created by the War. Like the nudist cult, fancy dress parties, treasure hunts, the latest dance, and all the other youth 'crazes' that swept interwar Britain, hiking was an 'assertion *against* social norms and mores'; a deliberate violation of 'traditional limits of mature behaviour…a prolongation of adolescent styles into adult years'.[21]

Far from disappearing as the War gradually faded into the past, the generation gap appears to have widened as the economic and political situation deteriorated across Europe and the pre-War and War-generation hunkered down, becoming increasingly conservative and insular. Ross McKibbin argues that the conventional wisdom of 'the public' in the 1930s was essentially bourgeois and conservative.[22] Alison Light identifies a 'conservative modernity' in the interwar years, 'an Englishness…more inward looking, more domestic and more private'.[23] Orwell observed that 'many people whose ideas were formed in the eighties or earlier had carried them quite unmodified into the nineteen-twenties.' The older generation sought to uphold traditional values – 'patriotism, religion, the Empire, family, the sanctity of marriage, the Old School Tie, birth, breeding, honour, discipline'. Meanwhile, so far as the younger generation was concerned, 'the official beliefs were dissolving like sand-castles'.[24]

[18] J. Davis, *Youth and the Condition of Britain* (1990); Fowler, *First Teenagers*.
[19] Harris, *Private Lives,* 95.
[20] K. Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in P. Kecskemeti, ed., *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1952), 288, 305.
[21] See D.J. Taylor, *Bright Young People* (2007); H. Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation* (1989); M. Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (2008); L. Moore, *Anything Goes* (2008). M. Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, 1990 ed., 346 (first pubd.1989); M. Green, *Children of the Sun: A Narrative of Decadence in England after 1918* (Mount Jackson, 2008), 218.
[22] R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Oxford, 1990), ch.9.
[23] A. Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (1991), 8.
[24] G. Orwell, *Inside the Whale*, 1966 ed., 23, 36-37 (first pubd.1940).

Seeking reassurance in an increasingly uncertain world, many of the older generation sought comfort in the essential decency of 'the British character'.[25] 'Pont' produced a series of cartoons in *Punch* during the 1930s celebrating the British character. They emphasised 'a tendency to think things not so good as they used to be', 'political apathy', and 'the importance of not being intellectual'.[26] As David Cannadine observes, the 'British character' was a celebration of 'plainness and ordinariness'.[27] His view was echoed by Jan Morris, who observed that, in the sadness of War, Britain had lost 'the *brio* of success and she had no grand idea to offer, no message of hope or change'.[28] It was not a philosophy calculated to appeal to youth. As Jack Longland (born 1905), president of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, noted: 'It was a diminished and middle-aged world which we inherited.'[29]

The older generation became preoccupied with 'youth getting out of bounds, flaunting authority, challenging principles and behaviour which have been held sacrosanct'.[30] According to Stephen Humphries, much of the anxiety about 'generational conflict' was founded upon a growing awareness of social inequality and the potential for class conflict, led by the young.[31] Paul Thompson points out that one of the largely unnoticed consequences of the War was the emancipation of children, as parental authority was undermined by the absence of fathers during the War.[32] A growing sense of moral panic was fuelled by lurid press articles and novels describing the behaviour of a vicious youthful underclass. Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* (1938) is perhaps the most famous of the genre, but novels such as *No Mean City* (1935), co-authored by a journalist and a former member of Glaswegian razor gang, sold 500,000 copies, and even the gentle and humorous *London Belongs to Me* (1945) contains a psychopathic teenage killer, brought up by an adoring War widow.[33]

One of the many manifestations of the erosion of traditional values during the interwar years was the decline in formal religious observance among the young. However, legislation lagged far behind social practice and Sabbatarian laws, designed to protect

[25] P. Mandler, 'The Consciousness of Modernity? Liberalism and the English "National Character", 1870-1940', in M. Daunton and B. Rieger, eds., *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001).
[26] Pont, *The British Character* (1938).
[27] Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow*, 163.
[28] J. Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets*, 1998 ed., 209-10 (first pubd. 1978).
[29] J. Longland, 'Between the Wars, 1919-39', *AJ* 62 (1957), 83.
[30] Cameron, Lush, and Meara, *Disinherited Youth*, 80. See also A. E. Morgan, *The Needs of Youth* (Oxford, 1939), 191.
[31] Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*, 13.
[32] Thompson, *The Edwardians*, 271.
[33] Marwick, *The Deluge*, 119. G. Greene, *Brighton Rock* (1938); A. McArthur and H. Kingsley Long, *No Mean City* (1935)*;* N Collins, *London Belongs to Me* (1945).

the sanctity of British Sundays, acted as recruiting officers for the outdoor movement. In 1930, Somerset Maugham observed that 'thirty years ago…God was all the fashion. It was good form to believe…then God went out and Pan came in.'[34] During the working week, which included Saturday mornings for most workers, young people might escape the confines of their homes in the evenings and meet at the cinema or the dance hall, but on Sundays such pleasures were forbidden by law. Hiking was one of few activities available on the Sabbath where the young could meet other people of their own age, beyond the supervision of family and other authority figures. Dance halls were closed on Sundays throughout the interwar period, and league football matches were not permitted on the Sabbath until 1974, but it is perhaps no coincidence that the hiking craze peaked in 1932, when the Sunday Entertainments Act permitted cinemas to open on Sundays for the first time.

While the old continued to dominate the religious and political establishment and the voluntary associations that formed the backbone of civic life, the young progressively took control of the means of cultural diffusion, through literature, newspapers and the new mass media of radio, films and advertising. Through these means, youth culture and a cult of youth started to develop:

> A changing spirit was most apparent among writers…the younger generation… quickly thrust its elders into the background…The mood of the twenties in society and in the arts was in contrast with that in politics, in looking forward rather than backwards; in the thirties also there was a contrast between the two, but of a different sort; the political mood was one of drawing inwards, of insularity, the literary mood was outgoing, inclining towards a world view, social consciousness, a platonic affection for the proletariat.[35]

The rejection of the values espoused by the older generation of writers and artists was particularly apparent in changing attitudes to the countryside. Paul Fussell claims that in the midst of the apocalyptic landscape of War, the English countryside formed an important part of many soldiers' thoughts – 'bucolic interludes…sandwiched between bouts of violence and terror'.[36] Sassoon, for example, remembered that 'the Hindenburg Tunnel was precariously infused with evocations of rural England and we challenged our surroundings with remembrances of parish names and farmhouses with

[34] W.S. Maugham, *Cakes and Ale*, 2005 ed., 92 (first pubd.1930).
[35] Mowat, *Between the Wars*, 201.
[36] P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 2000 ed., 236 (first pubd.1975).

friendly faces'.[37] Likewise, in art, the War was seen as an 'outrage on Nature' as well as humanity. Paul Nash's painting 'We are Making a New World' (1918) was 'widely hailed as one of the greatest…images of the conflict', yet it contains no humans.[38] Instead, it shows a landscape of shattered trees, mud and stagnant pools. Hynes describes Nash's paintings as 'elegies for the death of landscape'.[39]

For many of the War generation, peace was visualised as the English countryside, while war was urban and industrial. Ford Madox Ford imagined war 'spreading under the sunlight, an almost invisible pall, over the elms, the hills, the heather, like the vapour that spreads from…Middlesbrough'.[40] Stephen Calloway argues that 'in the aftermath of the First World War the patriotic dimension of the spirit of place and attachment to "the Land" became hugely significant and the countryside became a site of commemoration for the War generation'.[41] The purchase of open country to serve as a lasting memorial to the War dead was not a coincidence; if the War poets, painters and novelists were representative, it reflected the dreams and aspirations of the War generation.[42]

The post-War generation of writers rejected the bucolic nostalgia of their elders. According to Harold Acton (born 1904), the Georgian poets were 'as effete a gang of poetasters as ever won praise from a misguided public', while Orwell dismissed Rupert Brooke's 'Grantchester', the star poem of 1913, as 'nothing but an enormous gush of "country" sentiment, a sort of accumulated vomit from a stomach stuffed with place-names'.[43] Young intellectuals in the 1920s championed a hygienic, internationalist, essentially urban, modernist aesthetic; 'a modern fantasy of cleanliness', according to Alexandra Harris.[44] However, when the Gold Standard was dropped in 1931, and foreign travel became prohibitively expensive, artists rediscovered the English countryside, and a lucrative new source of work. Car manufacturers, oil companies and railways commissioned both War-generation artists, such as Nash, and post-War

[37] Sassoon, *Memoires of an Infantry Officer*, 162.
[38] Herbert Read in D. B. Haycock, *Paul Nash* (2002), 32-3.
[39] Hynes, *A War Imagined*, 199, 201.
[40] F. M. Ford, *Parade's End*, 2013 ed.,166 (first pubd.1928).
[41] Calloway, S., 'Patriotism, Polemic and Romantic Psychogeography' in G. Saunders, ed., *Recording Britain* (2011), 62. See also J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge, 1995).
[42] K. Grieves, 'The Quiet of the Country and the Restless Excitement of Towns: Rural Perspectives on the Home Front 1914-1918', in M. Tebbutt, ed., *Rural and Urban Encounters in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester, 2003). M. Tebbutt, 'Landscapes of Loss: Moorlands, Manliness and the First World War', *Landscapes* 2 (2004).
[43] H. Acton, *Memoirs of an Aesthete*, 1984 ed., 99 (first pubd.1948); Orwell, *Inside the Whale*, 21.
[44] A. Harris, *Romantic Moderns* (2010), 16.

artists, like Graham Sutherland (born 1903), to produce striking modernist images of the British countryside to advertise their wares. To some, this renewed interest in the country seemed regressive, but many landscape paintings and posters in the 1920s and '30s reflected a new instrumentalist attitude, portraying young people sunbathing, swimming, cycling and hiking. Rather than a place of dignified labour, traditional values and aesthetic contemplation, the English countryside was depicted as a social space for healthy, active, youthful recreation.[45]

Despite these changing fashions among the intellectual elite, rural nostalgia continued to sell well throughout the interwar period as the War generation aged. Housman outsold Eliot and Auden combined, and there was an outpouring of middle-brow rural literature – country novels, autobiographies, guidebooks and other non-fiction – 'a strange formation in which observation, myth, record and half-history are so deeply entwined', according to Raymond Williams.[46] Country novels such as Mary Webb's *Precious Bane* (1924) and Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford* trilogy (1939-43) were best-sellers.[47] The genre was sufficiently recognisable for Stella Gibbons to parody it in *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932).[48] There were guidebooks to the countryside for the new lower-middle-class owners of mass-produced cars. Henry Morton went *In Search of England*, and *Scotland*, and *Wales*, in a bull-nosed Morris (1927-32), while S. P. B. Mais – self-proclaimed 'ambassador for the countryside' – produced 23 books chronicling 'hurried journeys' made between 1930 and 1940, as well as being a popular broadcaster on the BBC: 'If…listeners did not want to rush off at once and explore the district through which I had just rushed, I had failed entirely in my purpose.'[49] Dent's *Open Air Library* appeared in 1932, Batsford's *British Heritage* and *Face of Britain* series followed in 1936, and even Stephenson, a radical access campaigner, produced a *Countryside Companion* for the suburban market in 1939.[50]

[45] T. Wilcox, *A Day in the Sun: Outdoor Pursuits in Art in the 1930s* (2006).

[46] P. Parker, *Housman Country: Into the Heart of England* (2016); Williams, *Country and City in the Modern Novel*, 313; C. Brace, 'Publishing and Publishers: Towards an Historical Geography of Countryside Writing C.1930-1950', *Area* 33, 3 (2001), 287-96.

[47] M. Webb, *Precious Bane* (1924); F. Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (Oxford, 1945).

[48] S. Gibbons, *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932).

[49] H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (1927); *In Search of Scotland* (1929); *In Search of Wales*, (1932). C. R. Perry, 'In Search of H. V. Morton: Travel Writing and Cultural Values in the First Age of British Democracy', *Twentieth Century British History* 10, 4 (1999), 431-56. S. P. B. Mais, *This Unknown Island* (1932), vii.

[50] T. Morden, 'The Pastoral and the Pictorial', *Ten* 8, 12 (1983), 18-25; M. Chase, 'This Is No Claptrap, This Is Our Heritage', in C. Shaw and M. Chase, eds.,*The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia* (Manchester, 1989). T. Stephenson, ed., *Countryside Companion* (1939).

Just like the 'British character', much of this material was 'patriotic…myth-making', but astute politicians seized the opportunity to soothe a troubled electorate.[51] In the year of the General Strike, Stanley Baldwin chose to make a speech describing

> the sounds of England, the tinkle of hammer on anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function.[52]

While the Right Book Club published rural books that stressed traditional values and Tory paternalism, the Labour Party, with an overwhelmingly urban, industrial membership, was unsure what to do about the country.[53] Ramsay MacDonald professed his love of walking, boasted of trespassing, and became president of the National League of Hikers, but the left wing of his party regarded almost any activity that distracted attention from class struggle as a frivolous waste of time.[54] Advertisers and marketers, however, were quick to recognise the potency of nostalgic rural myths. In 1926, 'Senior Service' cigarette cards featured scenes from the British countryside together with verses by Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shakespeare. The target market was the fast-growing suburban middle class, but it was their children who collected the cards.

By the late 1920s, middle-class Britain was saturated with rural literature and imagery. But there was a generational divide in the emotional response that these images evoked. The War generation saw the country as a place of peace, tranquillity, traditional values and stability, and perhaps dreamed of retiring to a cottage in the country.[55] The young had a more active, instrumentalist approach, seeing the countryside as a place of freedom, adventure and companionship; a temporary escape from work, urban surroundings, and their elders. From the mid-1920s, a growing number of journalists started to proselytise a new youthful, gregarious, energetic form of engagement with the countryside. As literacy increased, newspaper sales soared –

[51] Chase, M., 'This is no Claptrap', 130. See also 'Stanley Baldwin and Francis Brett Young' in Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow*, ch.7; P. J. Taylor, 'The English and their Englishness', *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 107, 3 (1991), 146-61.

[52] S. Baldwin, *On England and Other Addresses* (1926), 5.

[53] See Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*.

[54] K. Morgan, *Ramsay Macdonald* (2006), 90; J. R. MacDonald, *Wanderings and Excursions* (1925), 11; J. Gardiner, *The Thirties: An Intimate Story*, 2011 ed., 183 (first pubd. 2010).

[55] Like Mr Josser, the retired clerk, in Collins, *London Belongs to Me*.

a survey in 1939 concluded that 69 per cent of the population over 16 read a national daily and 82 per cent read a national Sunday paper – and the 'hiking craze' was born.[56] In 1927, 'Rover' in the *Daily Express* offered a prize of £2 2s for the best photographs showing 'the beauty of nature, and the various aspects of the Youth Movement'.[57] The *Daily Dispatch* carried regular articles on country walking from 1928. Stanley Baron's weekly column in the *News Chronicle* started in 1930. Claude Fisher's 'Hints for Hikers' in the *Daily Mail* and Patrick Monkhouse's 'Footpath Way' in the *Manchester Guardian* both started in 1931. Tom Stephenson's weekly column 'Afoot in Britain' appeared in the *Daily Herald* from 1933 and there were innumerable outdoor columnists in the evening and regional press, including 'Montana' in the *Liverpool Echo*; 'Alfresco' in the *Liverpool Express*; 'Tramp Royal' in the *Evening News*; 'Hobnailer' in the Scottish *Daily Record and Mail*; 'Citizen Ramble' in the *Evening Citizen;* and Alastair Borthwick's 'Open Air' column in the *Glasgow Daily Herald*.

Illustration 3: First edition of *Ruc-Sac*, July 1931. The cover photograph suggests the age and occupation of the target reader (BL). Note the three telephones.

[56] Pugh, *We Danced All Night*, 327.
[57] *Daily Express*, 12 May 1927.

Specialist outdoor magazines also started to appear. *Open Air* (1923), published by *Country Life* and costing 1s, was targeted at middle-class 'lovers of nature and the outdoor life'. With high quality photographs and adverts for luxury goods, it covered a range of outdoor activities, including motor touring, photography, wildlife, fishing, boating, climbing and skiing, in addition to walking. The walks it described sometimes had a literary flavour, such as 'Tramping with Tess', a walk through Dorset in the footsteps of Thomas Hardy, and there were slightly patronising articles on 'country wit and humour'.[58] *Open Road* (1923), a magazine 'devoted to scouting, camping and the open-air life' (later amended to 'rovering, woodcraft and the open-air life' when Leslie Paul became editor) appeared in the same year. Costing just 3d, it was aimed at a far younger readership.[59]

Out-o'-Doors (1927), priced at 3d, was the first mass market outdoor magazine. Described as 'The Mag' for Ramblers, Amateur Photographers, and Anglers', it was published in Manchester and initially targeted the formal rambling movement in the North but later extended its circulation to the South and included notes from the Ramblers' Federations in London, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield. In its first year, the magazine contained numerous adverts for products aimed at naturalists, such as butterfly nets and collecting cases. In later years, as the popularity of country walking soared, the range of camping, hiking and other outdoor consumer goods on offer expanded dramatically. While many of the regular correspondents in *Out-o'-Doors* were well known and relatively elderly figures in the tramping and rambling movement, the letters pages suggest a younger readership, some of whom were proud to sign themselves 'Hiker'.[60] The magazine encouraged a sense of community amongst its readers, inviting them to contribute photographs and comments on topical issues. However, many articles suggest a profound localism and lack of familiarity with the history and geographical extent of the outdoor movement. In 1931, for example, 'Observer' wrote: 'It would be interesting to know how long ago the first rambling club was formed. I believe a club was formed in Sheffield nearly 50 years ago but I have no exact information. Perhaps some of our older readers can provide particulars that will settle this point.'[61] In October 1931, *Out-o'-Doors* created a separate southern edition, which enabled correspondents in both parts of the country to express their regional prejudices. 'Wanderbird', a regular correspondent in the northern edition, for example, offered the opinion that 'the Southerner cannot get rid of the notion that he must

[58] *Open Air*, Jun. 1923, 4, 30.
[59] See page 157.
[60] E.g. *OoD*, Jan. 1932, 152.
[61] *OoD,* Jun. 1931, 112.

always go about on his walks like a gentleman.'[62] In 1934, the magazine announced that there were 'hopeful signs that the "hiking craze" has passed'.[63] Shortly afterwards it merged with *Hiker and Camper*, and the combined magazine adopted the *Out-o'-Doors* title 'to solve once and for all the problem presented by the use of that objectionable word "Hiker".'[64]

Hiker and Camper first appeared in 1931, at the height of the hiking craze. Published in London, and affiliated to the *Daily Herald*, it was priced at 6d and printed in a compact, journal format. The magazine targeted both unaffiliated hikers and members of formal rambling clubs, with 'official news and gossip' from the YHA and the Camping Club, as well as rambling clubs and federations from around the country. Its first editor, John Walsh, was ousted in 1933 after attempting to set up a profit-making 'Hikers and Campers Association' in competition with the Ramblers' Federations, and was replaced by Tom Stephenson. However, with circulation falling, the magazine closed in 1934 and was acquired by Carl Brunning, who merged it with *Out-o'-Doors*. After the merger, the price of the new magazine-style *Out-o'-Doors* ('incorporating *Hiker and Camper*') was reduced to 3d, and it broadened its target market to include 'camping, canoeing, caravanning, cycling, motor touring, photography and rambling'. In 1935 it became the official organ of the Ramblers' Association, with a special section edited by Edwin Royce. The magazine survived until September 1939, but from 1937 onwards it ceased publication during the winter months, due to a lack of advertising revenue.[65]

Ruc-Sac also first appeared in the midst of the hiking craze in 1931. Edited by Claude Fisher, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, and priced at just 2d, it was emphatically aimed at the youthful mass outdoor movement. In an article entitled '20,000 Ramblers Condemn "Hikers"', written after attending a meeting of the National Council of Ramblers' Federations in 1931, Fisher noted that 'ramblers new and old will have none of the word "hiker"… Ramblers want to be called just plain "ramblers", and woe betide us if we don't.'[66] In the depths of the Depression, the magazine struck an optimistic note, exhorting its readers to 'keep on smiling!', and pointing out that hiking was a cheap pastime.[67] However, adverts and articles promoting a wide range of consumer products suggest a readership that was young but relatively affluent. In August 1931, for example, the magazine ran an article on 'Choosing a Radio Set for Camp' including

[62] *OoD*, Northern Edition, Oct. 1931, 83.
[63] *OoD*, Mar. 1934, 109.
[64] *H&C*, Aug 1934, inside cover.
[65] *OoD*, Oct. 1937, 213.
[66] *Ruc-Sac*, Nov. 1931, 158.
[67] *Ruc-Sac*, Nov. 1931, 155.

a photograph of a young couple drinking tea in a field, while listening to an enormous radio in a wooden cabinet. The article recommended a waterproof cover to prevent damage to the polish.[68] *Ruc-Sac* contained more articles by female correspondents than *Out-o'-Doors*, and a debate on 'shorts versus skirts' for the 'modern girl' ran for four issues, before being declared a draw. The main objection to shorts was the ridicule suffered by wearers as they travelled to join their fellow hikers. *Ruc-Sac* claimed a circulation of 50,000, but ceased publication within a year as the hiking craze peaked and rapidly subsided.

After being dismissed as editor of *Hiker and Camper*, John Walsh briefly reappeared as editor of a new magazine *Tramper and Cyclist* (price 3d) in 1934. Walsh dedicated the London-based magazine to 'hikers, trampers, members of the Youth Hostel Association and cyclists' (but not ramblers). Walsh warned that 'the open air movement is in danger of being wiped out by cranks of all kinds' and stated that the magazine was 'not going to help any association, league, gang or outfit to protect the country…We believe the mission of "Tramper and Cyclist" is…to be a pal as it were to the cyclist or hiker who treats his sport as a pastime.'[69] Walsh was replaced as editor in 1935 when the magazine acquired the *Open Road* title and sought to broaden its appeal to 'Ramblers, Cyclists, Motor Cyclists, Campers, Caravanners and All Open Roaders'. It ceased publication in 1937.

As the popularity of hiking grew in the late 1920s, numerous 'how-to' guides also appeared, often written by the same journalists.[70] There were also films, including 'Hiking Hints by John Walsh', produced by British Pathé in 1933. By 1930, almost the entire population of Britain was exposed to some form of media extolling the virtues of strenuous walking in the country, much of it written by, and targeted at, the post-War generation.

Class

There were also profound class differences in attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside. As Martin Wiener and others have discussed, the link between land and social status in Britain persisted well into the twentieth century, despite the dramatic decline in the profitability and economic significance of agriculture, and this relationship

[68] *Ruc-Sac*, Aug. 1931, 55.
[69] *T&C*, Mar. 1934, 1; Feb. 1935, 291.
[70] E.g. D. F. Morgan, *Hiking* (1927); C. F. Carr, *The Complete Hiker and Camper* (1931); W. Holt-Jackson, *Camping and Hiking for All* (1931); C. Fisher, *Hikecraft: Hints for Ramblers and Lightweight Campers from the Daily Mail (*1932); B. Stanley, *The Hiker's Companion* (1932).

formed an important backdrop to the mass outdoor movement and particularly the interwar access campaign.[71]

More than 80 per cent of children born between 1901 and 1911 were born in towns and cities, and for the majority of the urban population family connections to the country became increasingly rare and distant.[72] According to Orwell, even 'the rentier-professional class was ceasing…to have any real relationship with the soil; but...there prevailed then, far more than now, a kind of snobbish belonging to the country and despising of the town'.[73] Members of the interwar intellectual and professional elite had typically been educated at public schools located in rural areas and many maintained links to the country in later life through property ownership and participation in country sports. When large numbers of young, working- and lower-middle-class hikers started to leave the industrial towns and cities in the mid-1920s, they discovered a countryside that was still overwhelmingly owned by an upper-middle and upper class whose conception of the land was strongly linked to ideas of possession and status.[74] Land was a symbol of continuity, a legacy to be handed on to future generations, but, as Virginia Woolf described in *Between the Acts*, it was a legacy that was increasingly under threat, from dead heirs, death duties and development:

> Some had been there for centuries, never selling an acre…Half the ladies and gentlemen present would have said: '*Adsum*; I'm here, in place of my grandfather or great grandfather,' as the case may be. At this very moment, half-past three on a June day in 1939 they greeted each other, and as they took their seats, finding if possible a seat next to one another, they said: 'That hideous new house at Pyes Corner! What an eyesore! And those bungalows! – have you seen 'em?'[75]

E. M. Forster, a fellow member of the Bloomsbury Group, mocked the exclusive attitude of the upper-middle class to rural property: 'Does my wood belong to me or doesn't it? And if it does, should I not own it best by allowing no one else to walk there?'[76] D. H. Lawrence, one of the few acclaimed working-class authors of the interwar period, also recognised the importance of privacy and possession to the upper

[71] Wiener, *The Decline of the Industrial Spirit.*
[72] Harris, *Private Lives*, 43; Mandler, 'Against Englishness'.
[73] Orwell, *Inside the Whale*, 21.
[74] A. Potts, '"Constable Country" Between the Wars', in R. Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, Vol. III (1989) argues that the lower-middle class sought a sense of identity, rather than ownership.
[75] V. Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 1984 ed., 58 (first pubd.1941).
[76] E. M. Forster, 'My Wood' (1926) in *Abinger Harvest* (1936), 23.

classes. In his novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), he draws an analogy between Sir Clifford's attitude to his land and to his wife: 'Clifford loved the wood; he loved the old oak trees. He felt they were his own through generations. He wanted to protect them. He wanted this place inviolate, shut off from the world… "I want this wood perfect...untouched. I want nobody to trespass in it."'[77]

While the 1920s and '30s saw a general improvement in the well-being of the majority of the population, the upper-middle class suffered a relative decline in status. The seemingly effortless superiority of the professional and upper classes was under threat from increased taxation, the empowerment of the working classes, the death of deference, and the erosion of their monopoly of culture and learning.[78] In crude economic terms, the working class in 1934 represented about 75 per cent of the population and lived on £4 a week or less; the lower-middle class represented about 20 per cent and lived on between £4 and £10 per week; while the upper-middle and upper class had an income of £10 a week or more ('a room of one's own and £500 a year' being the minimum requirement for an independent life, free from financial worry).[79] More than £2,000 a year represented the level of 'the big capitalists, the bankers, the landlords and the idle rich', numbering around 72,000 in 1921.[80] Just 9,595 people had an income above £10,000 in the same year.[81] But purely economic distinctions were becoming obsolete. Skilled workers in the new industries could earn £6 a week or more; there was a vast increase in the demand for white-collar workers, with many recruits drawn from working-class backgrounds; and the 'profiteer' and 'hard-faced men who looked as if they had done well out of the war' threatened to eclipse traditional elites.[82] Despite these economic changes, 'class' continued to be defined as much by family background and upbringing as by money, and because of the strong ties that existed between land and status, attitudes to and usage of the countryside were key signifiers of upbringing.

In 1922, Masterman claimed that the middle class 'hates and despises the working classes…partly because it has contempt of them, and partly because it has fear of

[77] D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Penguin 1960 ed., 43-44 (first pubd.1928).
[78] S. Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910-2010* (2014), chs.1, 2.
[79] V. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 2000 ed., 93 (first pubd.1928).
[80] G. Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius*, 1962 ed., 77 (first pubd.1941).
[81] Inland Revenue statistics quoted in Masterman, *England After War*, 137.
[82] Such as Rolls Royce, see J. Hilton, *English Ways: A Walk from the Pennines to the Epsom Downs in 1939* (1940), 56. A conservative MP quoted in J. M. Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1920), 112.

them'.[83] McKibbin agrees, arguing that widespread resentment of the working class arose from the impoverishment and loss of status of the middle class after the War.[84] The primary target of upper-middle-class snobbery was not the traditional working class who 'knew their place', particularly in rural areas; it was the young and rapidly expanding upper-working and lower-middle class – the grammar-school and scholarship boys and girls; and young men and women who studied at night school – the 'lettered barbarian lightly washed with information' who aspired to the same privileges enjoyed by the professional and landowning classes.[85] One of those privileges was access to and enjoyment of the country.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there is considerable academic confusion about the class identity of the mass outdoor movement. In part, this appears to have arisen because most middle-aged and middle-class commentators at the time saw hikers as an undifferentiated group of urban youths. The adoption of a common 'uniform' of shorts and colourful open-necked shirts obscured class and even gender signifiers. As 'Pathfinder' observed in 1930: 'Hiking clothes…have "caught on"…Girls…sometimes adopt the hiking outfit, so that there is little to distinguish the two sexes when you see a party out on a "hike" at holiday-time.'[86] As Chapter 5 will show, participants in the movement ranged from unemployed manual workers to Oxbridge undergraduates, but the majority came from family backgrounds on the blurred boundary between the working and middle classes at a time of improving educational provision and rapid expansion of white-collar jobs. They did not fall conveniently into any particular class or ideological category. Furthermore, anecdotal evidence from biographies and autobiographies suggests a strong correlation between hiking and other voluntary activities demanding hard work, perseverance and curiosity, such as studying for scholarships or attending night school. In 1934, J. B. Priestley observed that while the 'passive and the listless' went to Blackpool, intelligent and enterprising young people tended to go hiking.[87]

Opinions differ on the degree of social mobility in the 1920s and '30s. Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, for example, argue that the transition from manual to white-collar work remained relatively rare, while Dudley Baines and Paul Johnson maintain that

[83] Masterman, *England After War*, 54.
[84] McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, ch.9.
[85] M. Butts, *Warning to Hikers* (1932), 10.
[86] Pathfinder, *The Complete Rambler* (1930), 26.
[87] Priestley, *English Journey*, 267-68.

class identities were increasingly fluid.[88] Participants in the interwar mass outdoor movement appear to have enjoyed a high degree of social mobility, and while many may have come from working-class backgrounds, most pursued middle-class careers. Hikers therefore came from precisely the social class and age-group that posed the greatest threat to the established privileges of the upper-middle class.

To some extent, the differing attitudes of older and younger users of the countryside can be explained by the fact that, for the former, it represented continuity and stability, while for the latter it was a novelty. In *Topophilia* (1974), Yi-Fu Tuan seeks to unravel the complex emotional ties between people and place, dividing them into two broad categories. The first depends upon familiarity: fondness for a place because it is home, or incarnates the past, or because it evokes pride of ownership or of creation. The second is more transient: the pleasure inspired by the discovery of a new view; the sudden sensual delight of physical contact; or the simple joy in things because of animal health, youth and vitality.[89] However, the dichotomy between familiarity and novelty, alone, cannot explain the hostility that arose between hikers and older residents and users of the countryside.

Members of the interwar establishment were imbued with 'Milton-Keats-Tennysonian culture, that profuse and blooming romanticism…which had dominated English literature until the death of…Rupert Brooke'.[90] They had been taught to believe that appreciation of fine landscapes demanded education and training. Going for a country walk, particularly in the mountains, was a cultural act, undertaken in solitude or with a few like-minded friends. In contrast, the young *arrivistes* who discovered the countryside in the 1930s were less inclined to mythologise the landscape. They were noisy, gregarious and irreverent. Denis Cosgrove argues that 'the intention of the hikers was not primarily to *see* landscape, so much as to experience it physically – to walk it, climb it or cycle through it'.[91]

In the preface to *The Bleak Age* (1934), John and Barbara Hammond expressed the commonly held upper-middle-class belief that the urban masses were simply not ready

[88] M. Savage and A. Miles, *The Remaking of the British Working Class* (1975), 38; D. Baines and P. Johnson, 'In Search of the "Traditional" Working Class: Social Mobility and Occupational Continuity in Interwar London', *Economic History Review* 52 (1999), 692-713.

[89] Y-F. Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (New Jersey,1974), 4, 247. See also The Centre for Leisure Research, *Access to the Countryside for Recreation and Sport* (Cheltenham, 1986), 45.

[90] C. Connolly quoted in Carpenter, *Brideshead Generation*, 25.

[91] D. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Beckenham, 1984), 268. K. Olwig, 'Review of "Landscape and Identity"', *Journal of Social History* 36 (2003), 778.

for the leisure that they now enjoyed, nor were they intellectually capable of appreciating beauty:

> It is absurd to expect, from a raw mass of untrained mind and emotion, submitted to the influences of the cinema and the radio, an educated taste. The educated man can respond to the stimulus of ideas or the beauty of art; the uneducated man responds to effects that are sensational, immediate, astonishing, and crude.[92]

Ivor Brown, the journalist and critic, observed in 1935 that 'middle-class people, rather apt to regard the beauty and solitude of the countryside as their personal property, resent the crowds at "beauty spots"'.[93] But there was more to their reaction than mere resentment at overcrowding. The crowds of young urban hikers who went into the countryside in the 1930s transgressed accepted cultural norms and were portrayed as a threat to 'normal', law-abiding citizens. Unlike respectable, deferential ramblers and naturalists, hikers were considered deviant.[94]

Middle-class liberals tried their best to be forgiving, expressing the hope that, as they grew older, hikers would adopt the habits and mores of their elders. Writing in 1935, Professor George Stapledon noted with regret that 'no longer can the country be the prerogative of the few – that happy time for the favoured few has definitely ended…the hiker now hikes where previously only we had walked'. Nevertheless, he expressed the optimistic view that 'the love of Nature is latent in every human being…We should…endeavour to educate them in the ways of the country.'[95] Cyril Joad suggested that the English countryside was 'an instrument, the most important we possess, for the training of the citizens of the future in the art of right living.'[96] Others were less sanguine. Mary Butts was particularly outspoken:

> It is…in every sense a vulgar story…The enemy is the democratic enemy, in a country where people have lost their stations and like badly-trained children can neither keep their places nor respect other people's…It is…taken for granted…that what drives the hikers out over the country-side is a half-articulate wish in the soul of man to return to

[92] J. L. Hammond, *The Bleak Age* (West Drayton, 1934), 7.
[93] I. Brown, *The Heart of England* (1935), 4.
[94] Cf Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place* (Minnesota, 1996), 88-94, which explores how the press portrayed the 'New Age' travellers who 'invaded' farmers' fields near Stonehenge in the 1980s as 'out of place' in both a spatial and a social sense.
[95] R. G. Stapledon, *The Land Now and Tomorrow* (1935), 4, 267.
[96] Joad, *Charter for Ramblers*, 157.

> the earth. Nothing seems to be more unlikely. Curiosity, a proper love of exercise, a chance to be alone with your boy or girlfriend, a new stunt, mass suggestion by the Press, which has its own reasons. That is how it began.[97]

Mary Butts was correct in asserting that most hikers had no ambition to 'return to the earth', except at weekends.[98] While some members of the upper-middle class idealised the stability and continuity of a peasant smallholding economy, where an individual's physical location and social status are rooted in the soil, the instincts of most hikers were exploratory and nomadic; they aspired to both geographic and social mobility. Even the growth of the notorious 'plotlands' near many 'beauty spots' was spurred mainly by 'weekenders' seeking a better life, rather than people permanently living and working in the country.[99]

Of 246 working-class men and women interviewed in Sheffield by the St Philip's YMCA Settlement Education and Economics Research Society in 1919, just 3 per cent expressed any enthusiasm for going back to the land, while 10 per cent emphatically rejected the idea.[100] The proportion rejecting the notion was highest among people who regularly walked in and were familiar with the country, most of whom were skilled workers. One male and eleven females expressed a desire to retire in the country, but the ambition was typically couched as a romantic dream, in some imaginary, financially secure, old age. The marked lack of enthusiasm for living in the country in the St Philip's survey is significant for three reasons: firstly, Sheffield was close to two well-known 'back-to-the land' experiments – Ruskin's St George's Farm at Totley, and Carpenter's commune at Millthorpe; secondly, in 1919, the agricultural sector was enjoying boom conditions; and thirdly, with steel production close to its wartime peak, Sheffield was one of the most heavily polluted industrial cities in Britain. As Orwell observed in 1937, 'even Wigan is beautiful compared to Sheffield...If at rare moments you stop smelling sulphur it is because you have begun smelling gas. Even the shallow river...is usually bright yellow with some chemical or other.'[101] If there was one town in Britain where industrial workers might have been expected to harbour nostalgic, neo-

[97] Butts, *Warning to Hikers*, 5, 10, 18.
[98] See J. Marsh, *Back to the Land: The Pastoral Impulse in England from 1880 to 1914* (1982); P. Gruffudd, 'Back to the Land: Historiography, Rurality and the Nation in Interwar Wales', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 19, 1 (1994).
[99] P. Dickens, 'A Disgusting Blot on the Landscape', *New Society* 17 July 1975; D. Hardy and C. Ward, *Arcadia for All: The Legacy of a Makeshift Landscape* (1984).
[100] St Philip's Settlement Education and Economics Research Society, *The Equipment of the Workers* (George Allen & Unwin, 1919). See page 159.
[101] Orwell, *Road to Wigan Peer*, 95.

romantic dreams of going back to the land, Sheffield was it. But despite calls from politicians, including Ramsay MacDonald and David Lloyd George, to resettle returning soldiers and the unemployed on the land, the 'back-to-the-land' movement held almost no appeal to the urban working class in 1919 and became even less attractive following the repeal, in 1921, of the Corn Production Act that had subsidised domestic agriculture during the War.[102]

The countryside depended upon a single industry, and from 1922 onwards that industry was in severe depression. Rural poverty may have been less concentrated than urban poverty in the interwar years, but it was far more widespread.[103] By the late 1920s and early 1930s, when the hiking craze took off, the countryside had an unkempt, poverty-stricken air. Even in relatively prosperous Oxfordshire, Cecil Day Lewis recorded in 1937 'the weedy fields, the roof-rent barns, the exhaustion and dilapidation caused by ten years of agricultural decay'.[104] Farm labourers' wages fell from £2.5s in 1921 to £1.10s a week in the 1930s – about half the average industrial wage.[105] In 1942, one third of villages in England lacked piped water, half had no sewerage and three quarters were not connected to mains electricity.[106] There was no refuse collection: 'Privy buckets were emptied into pits and rubbish built up in ash piles within throwing distance of the back door'.[107] The quality of housing for farm labourers was as bad, if not worse, than city slums. In *England's Green and Pleasant Land* (1925), Robertson Scott described the condition of the cottages in the parish of Idbury in Oxfordshire: of the 25 dwellings, none met the Ministry of Health's (very basic) requirements, twelve were deemed not worth repairing, and eight were unfit for habitation.[108]

Dismissed as 'Jony Hodges', 'clod hoppers' and 'louts', farm labourers were scorned by urban workers, and by many intellectuals, such as Huxley:

> For more than a century there has been a tendency for the most gifted members of small rural communities to leave home and seek their fortunes in the towns. Consequently what remains in the villages and country towns...is in

[102] C. A. Lockwood, 'From Soldier to Peasant? The Land Resettlement Scheme in East Sussex 1919-1939', *Albion* 30, 3 (1998), 439-62.
[103] See S. L. Bensusan, *Latter-Day Rural England* (1928); A. Howkins, *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (2003).
[104] C. Day Lewis, *The Buried Day* (1960), 221.
[105] A. Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850-1925* (1991), 282-83.
[106] D. Scott, *Report on Land Utilization in Rural Areas* (1943).
[107] W. Foley, *Full Hearts and Empty Bellies: A 1920s Childhood*, 2009 ed., 52 (first pubd.1974).
[108] J. W. Robertson Scott, *England's Green and Pleasant Land* (1925), 233-38.

> the nature of a residual population, dysgenically selected for its lack of spirit and intellectual gifts.[109]

In popular literature, even being 'in service' was portrayed as superior to life on the land. In H. E. Bates' *The Fallow Land* (1932), the farmer's wife wishes that her son, who will inherit a 50-acre farm, had improved his life by becoming a servant: 'He's too good for the land…he ought to ha' been [a] gentleman's servant, groom or something.'[110]

Only in Scotland did anything resembling a peasant smallholding economy still exist in Britain. Charles Orwin and William Darke pointed out why the 'back-to-the-land' movement held almost no appeal to ordinary working people:

> The Scottish crofter is still living in the eighteenth century, the Durham miner in the twentieth. While the crofter's mind is bent wholly upon the production of his means of life, the miner thinks of his labour as something that will give him a weekly cash income…'Buses, cinemas, football matches, racing, clubs, pubs, evening papers, libraries, paved roads and street lighting, water supply and sanitation mean nothing to the crofter. To the miner they represent a standard of living that he has come to regard as his due…What chance is there that he will be content to forego all that industrialism has given him?

They concluded that 'there is no more justification for raising the cry "back to the land" in the mining villages of Durham…than for raising the cry "back to the village blacksmith's shop" in Sheffield'.[111]

While the aspiration to go 'back-to-the-land' may have been a legitimate political objective for the English working class from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, as E. P. Thompson and others have argued, by the interwar years the vast majority of urban working people recognised it for what it was – a pastoral myth – and there is little evidence to suggest that hikers were motivated by a neo-romantic desire to return to some imaginary Arcadian past.[112] When thousands of young town-dwellers were evacuated to the countryside at the start of the Second World War, Harry

[109] Harris, *Private Lives*, 131. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, 79. But see G. R. Searle, 'Eugenics and Politics in Britain in the 1930s', *Annals of Science* 36 (1979), 159-69.
[110] H. E. Bates, *The Fallow Land*, 2006 ed., 61 (first pubd.1932).
[111] C. S. Orwin and W. F. Darke, *Back to the Land* (1935), 8, 92.
[112] Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 294. Gould, *Early Green Politics.* Holtby, *South Riding* gives a fictional account of both land resettlement schemes and 'plotlands'.

Batsford observed that 'to a very large number the change has spelt the direst depths of boredom and wretchedness, without even slight mitigation'.[113]

While most young members of the upper-working and lower-middle classes had no desire to live and work in the country, nor did they wish to remain in the overcrowded and polluted inner cities. Some 4.5 million new houses were built between the wars and 12 million people – nearly 30 per cent of the population – were rehoused in the suburbs.[114] Most were white-collar workers, but in the smaller houses and cheaper areas there were also skilled tradesmen, foremen and shopkeepers.[115] Once again, there were sharp class distinctions in perceptions of this new and rapidly expanding man-made environment, half way between town and country. According to John Betjeman, the suburbs were a world of 'radios, cars, advertisements, labour-saving homes, peroxide blondes, crooked businessmen, litter, painted toenails and people who wear public-school ties to which they are not entitled'.[116] Graham Greene invested the suburbs with 'something worse than the meanness of poverty, the meanness of spirit'.[117] But Jack Hilton, a plasterer from Rochdale, praised them:

> There must be thousands of these suburbs in England, each with its…cinema and shops. They all look good, and lead me to believe that they house a large core of the people of England who can be termed higher working class. Many of the people run a car, follow non-manual occupations, send their child to grammar school, hope to get it to the university.[118]

Chapter 5 will show that many young hikers came from the suburbs and, given the demographics of the movement, many more probably moved there when they married. But in the meantime, the relentless growth of the suburbs progressively cut off many city-dwellers from any connection with the countryside.[119] In 1926, *Country Life* recorded that London was expanding by a mile in every direction every eight to ten years: 'In 1823, no spot in London was more than two miles from open country, now

[113] H. Batsford, *How to See the Country* (1940), 1.
[114] Gardiner, *The Thirties*, 270; Halsey, ed., *Trends in British Society*, 303.
[115] A. A. Jackson, *Semi-Detached London: Suburban Development, Life and Transport, 1900-39* (1973), 140-69.
[116] John Betjeman quoted in J. Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (1992), 66.
[117] G. Greene, *Gun for Sale*, 2001 ed., 40 (first pubd.1936).
[118] Hilton, *English Ways*, 79.
[119] The term 'walking city', coined in S.B. Warner in *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston 1870-1900* (1962) referred to the ability of people to walk from home to work. The ability to walk from home into the country has received less attention.

the distance from the central area to fields is six to eight miles.'[120] As *Out-o'-Doors* reported in 1931:

> A generation ago…for a few coppers one could reach the open country by a short tram ride. Now it is necessary to spend at least half a crown to reach any unspoilt country in the London area and the time taken travelling cuts very seriously into a Saturday afternoon or Sunday walk.[121]

In small mill towns and mining communities, a walk in the country remained a relatively short-duration adjunct to everyday life, following familiar paths through fields and meadows known since childhood. But for people living in the vast and rapidly expanding conurbations of London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Glasgow, a walk in the country became a distinct leisure activity, demanding time, money and planning.

Gender

Changing patterns of employment also gave a spur to the outdoor movement by making country walking more affordable, accessible and attractive to a broader section of society, including women. As Ivor Brown observed in 1935: '"Hikers" are more often from the office than the factory. A hard week in the mill or the workshop inclines to less strenuous week-ends.'[122] For women, the major shift in employment was from domestic service to clerical and secretarial jobs with shorter and more predictable working hours.[123] Young women were particular beneficiaries of increasing economic empowerment and social mobility in the interwar years and their participation in the outdoor movement represents one of the most striking changes between the pre- and post-War period.[124] Selina Todd notes that, by 1931, women represented 42 per cent of the clerical workforce. Since the average age of marriage for women did not fall below 25 during the interwar years, the period heralded 'the emergence of youth as a life stage marked by a degree of personal independence and commercial consumption'. Todd argues that, while women who stayed at home were not deemed to be deserving of leisure, no matter how much drudgery their lives involved, the

[120] 'London of the Future', *Country Life*, 20 Mar. 1926, 406.
[121] 'Youth Hostels', *OoD*, Feb. 1931, 24.
[122] Brown, *Heart of England*, 64.
[123] A. Reid, 'World War I and the Working Class in Britain', in A. Marwick, ed., *Total War and Social Change* (Basingstoke, 1988), 18.
[124] Langhamer, *Women's Leisure*, 18, argues that in being distinct and separate from work and home, hiking was an early example of a 'male' style of leisure adopted by females.

dramatic increase in participation in formal employment during and after the War 'entitled' many young women to leisure activities for the first time.[125]

Hiking was seen as a modern, emancipating activity – a rejection of traditional models of femininity – but it was also safe and respectable.[126] When an anxious mother wrote to *Woman's Own* in 1936, asking whether she should allow her 17-year-old daughter to go on a camping trip 'with a crowd of boys and girls', she was advised by the magazine to let her go.[127] Art from the period emphasises the liberating sense of empowerment and independence that hiking engendered. In 'Hike for Health' (1931), a young woman in a short red skirt and black beret self-confidently points the way ahead to her male companion (see Illustration 2, page 29); while 'Hiking' (1936) by James Tucker, depicts three independent young women, wearing shorts and carrying rucksacks (see front cover).[128] Three of the four women portrayed in these images have bobbed hair in the fashionable 'flapper' style.[129]

A poem in *Out-o'-Doors* in 1927 stressed the emancipatory experience of walking in the country:

> Once with your flowing pigtail
> And your little print frock you stood;
> Or ran with shrill squeals
> With a boy at your heels,
> And you had to look nice and be good…
>
> Now with your short hair glinting
> In the light of a setting sun
> You roam o'er the hills
> And you revel in thrills,
> Reaching home when the long day is done
>
> Off on a Sunday early
> In clothes once you'd shrink from in shame,
> With small haversack
> Neatly hung on your back,
> You have changed…You have staked your claim![130]

[125] S. Todd, 'Poverty and Aspiration: Young Women's Entry to Employment in Inter-War England', *Twentieth Century British History* 15, 2 (2004), 123, 150, 165. See also J. M. Winter, *The Great War and the Great British People* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), 46. E. Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984) argues that parents continued to exercise strong authority until their daughters married.

[126] Langhamer, *Women's Leisure*, 77-80.

[127] *Woman's Own*, 30 May 1936, quoted in S. Todd, 'Young Women, Work, and Leisure in Interwar England', *Historical Journal* 48, 3 (2005), 805.

[128] Wilcox, *Day in the Sun*, 62, 66.

[129] See D. Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain c1920-c1970* (Basingstoke, 2008), ch. 3, for a discussion of the 'flapper' cult.

[130] 'The Ramblerette', *OoD*, Nov.1927, 111.

Hiking resonated with a generation of young women exposed for the first time to the glamour of Hollywood films, an increasingly sophisticated consumer products industry, and a growing cult of health and fitness. In 'Eve's Corner', *Out-o'-Doors* extolled the virtues of country walking as a means of developing

> beauty, vitality and magnetism…A perfect complexion in these modern days is more to be desired than rubies. What better beauty aids could be procured than the fresh breezes blowing straight from the seas over the moors, the soft rain gently blown into the skin, and the healthy race of the blood in the cheeks.

'Eve' described girls who spent their time in dance halls and cinemas as 'hot-house flowers – pale and puny, quick to bloom and quick to fade'. In contrast, by hiking in her youth, a sensible girl laid up 'the most precious treasure…a source of strength…when it is no longer possible to make the weekly venture into the Great Outdoors'.[131]

Many female hikers expressed pride in being physically fit and strong. Referring to his mother, who had been a keen hiker and youth hosteller, Raphael Samuel described walking as

> a kind of religion, a secular form of uplift in which 'fresh air', 'exercise' and 'scenery' took the place of the Holy Trinity…not so much a relaxation but as a way of strengthening body and soul, indeed they only became meaningful if they involved an element of hardship and sacrifice.[132]

When a correspondent signing himself 'Mr X' asked 'Is Winter Rambling Worthwhile?' in *Out-o'-Doors* magazine in December 1929, the letters page in the subsequent issue was full of scornful responses, including one from 'Six Lancashire Lasses' who 'never missed a Sunday yet'.[133] Sunshine was also regarded as a source of vitality, and being suntanned became a mark of health and modernity. As Cyril Connolly (born 1903) observed:

> In the break-up of religions and creeds there is but one deity whose worshippers have multiplied without set-back. The Sun…Let us leave England

[131] *OoD*, Nov.1927, 119.
[132] Samuel, 'Country Visiting', *Island Stories*, 139.
[133] *OoD*, Jan-Feb. 1930, 150.

> to retired Generals…goose-fleshed politicians and bureaucrats, while the rest of us heliotropes cluster nearer to the bronze disk of church-emptying Apollo.[134]

The Sunlight League, formed in 1924, advocated nude sunbathing, and swimming naked in lakes and rivers became a fashionable adjunct to tramping and climbing expeditions.[135] As Stephen Spender (born 1909) observed: 'It was easy to be advanced. You had only to take off your clothes.'[136] But the nudist cult was largely confined to the upper-middle class, and the *lebensreform* movement – which encouraged nudism, sexual liberation, a back-to-nature lifestyle, vegetarianism and abstention from alcohol and tobacco – did not achieve the same popularity in Britain as it did in Germany.[137] Nevertheless, more relaxed dress and behavioural codes played an important role in making country walking more accessible and attractive to women. In 1928, *Country Life* announced that 'women have now discovered the delightful joys of country walking…It is a new freedom that has come to the women of our times, a symbol of their emancipation from old ideas and, above all, from the impossible dresses of the past.'[138] Inevitably, the new freedom enjoyed by younger women was not universally welcomed. In a 1931 article entitled 'The Battle of the Legs', *Ruc-Sac* magazine reported that

> Mrs. Grundy, thought to have perished in the aftermath of the war, still lives and pursues all who differ with her. She is hot on the trail of those women hikers who have adopted shorts for wear instead of skirts.[139]

Increasing sexual freedom also played a role in the rapid expansion of the outdoor movement. Jennifer Hargreaves ascribes the relatively free intermixing and equality of the sexes to the fact that hiking largely took place outside an adult-controlled institutionalised framework, and when a member of the all-male, middle-class, Yorkshire Ramblers' Club was asked, in 1932, why hiking had suddenly become so popular, he responded dismissively that 'some people hold that most of it is only a modern form of "petting party"'.[140]

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[134] C. Connolly, *The Unquiet Grave*, 1981 ed., 66 (first pubd.1944).
[135] E.g. J. Perrin, *Menlove: The Life of John Menlove Edwards*, 1993 ed., 57 (first pubd. 1985).
[136] S. Spender, *World Within World*, 1991 ed., 109 (first pubd.1951).
[137] J. A. Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism and Conservation 1900-1940* (Stanford , 2007).
[138] *Country Life*, 12 May 1928, 667.
[139] *Ruc-Sac*, July 1931,17.
[140] J. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females* (1994), 139, 250; *YRCJ* (1932), 6, 20, 147.

The War and changing patterns of employment also influenced male attitudes to outdoor leisure. In the years leading up to the First World War, warfare had been portrayed as a life-affirming test of national will and individual spirit. But the defining 'hero' of the War was an anonymous, replaceable, 'unknown soldier', whose experience before death was a more or less extended period of squalor, hardship and suffering.[141] The lasting memories of the survivors were of relentless noise, discomfort and a sense of helpless futility, coupled with 'the trench-dweller's worst enemy, boredom'.[142] Nevertheless, during the interwar years, young men still craved the test of spirit and vitality that warfare had once provided, and in the outdoor movement, and particularly climbing, some discovered a 'moral equivalent of war'.[143]

Traditional models of masculinity were also under threat on the home front. With the decline of heavy industry, many working-class men found themselves doing 'effeminate' office work and increasing numbers moved to the new suburbs, which were seen as domestic and feminine, 'a site of emasculation' of English manhood.[144] Social commentators detected a change in attitudes as a result of the growth of large-scale, impersonal work places and standardised, repetitive tasks on production lines or in offices.[145] A survey of leisure activities in 1937-39 concluded that

> in the past, work provided the means of expression for physical and mental faculties…The life of the workshop made for social fellowship. Today…the conditions of a good and satisfactory life…tend more and more to find a home in the leisure hours. It is then that opportunities for friendship and fellowship and purposeful activity are being sought.[146]

Even within traditional heavy industry, working-class males were threatened. The link between masculinity and employment was strong, conferring status and a sense of pride on the male, both within his family and with his peers.[147] As unemployment increased, particularly in the North, higher-paid male workers were often laid-off before

[141] J. J. Hoffman, 'A Farewell to Masculinity? Feminisation and Masculine Crisis in Interwar Novels on WW1' (paper presented at the *KCL: Cultural Legacies of WW1*, 2015), 4. See also M. Roper, 'Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44, 2 (2005), 343-62.

[142] M. Plowman, *A Subaltern on the Somme* (New York, 1928), 48.

[143] W. James, 'The Moral Equivalent of War' (1910).

[144] S. Humphries and P. Gordon, *A Man's World: From Boyhood to Manhood 1900-1960* (1996), 110. G. Anderson, *Victorian Clerks* (Manchester, 1976), 56-60, notes that the phenomenon pre-dates the interwar period. Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 34-36.

[145] Fowler, *First Teenagers*, 60; R. McKibbin, 'Work and Hobbies in Britain 1880-1950', in J. M. Winter, ed., *The Working Class in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 1983), 144-45.

[146] Cameron, Lush, and Meara, *Disinherited Youth*, 100.

[147] J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male* (1996), 44 and 131.

cheaper female employees.[148] Tebbutt argues that the growth of rambling was directly linked to ideas of 'manly identity' and became a touchstone for 'broader fears of national effeminacy as contemporaries focused on young women's economic and cultural visibility'.[149] Michael Roper and John Tosh agree, noting that from 1800 until the 1930s, numerous figures from Charles Kingsley to Robert Baden-Powell saw outdoor pursuits as a means of promoting 'manly' virtues, including 'moral courage, sexual purity, athleticism and stoicism'.[150]

The mass outdoor movement was therefore a curious amalgam that simultaneously appealed to young men seeking fellowship and affirmation of traditional models of masculinity, and to young women rejecting traditional models of femininity. More importantly, it provided a social space in which both sexes could meet and intermingle on a broadly equal basis.[151]

Region

Rob Lambert maintains that 'the history of recreation in Britain owes as much to geography, as it does to class, religion, income, personal preference, generative influences, or the rise of leisure organisations and clubs', and the history of the outdoor movement, in particular, has been shaped as much by geomorphology and climate as by social and cultural influences.[152] The lowlands of the South and East of England have a warmer climate and richer soils than the uplands of the North and West. They had a far greater pre-industrial population and, as a consequence, have a denser network of rural footpaths, but there is relatively little common land because most was enclosed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In contrast, the uplands in the North and West of England and Wales include large areas of common land, and extensive privately-owned moorland and mountain, but have relatively few footpaths.[153] In Scotland, the disparity is even more pronounced because large parts of the Highlands were deliberately cleared of human habitation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to make way for sheep grazing. In addition to removing the

[148] J. L. Hodson, *Our Two Englands* (1936), 100.

[149] M. Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Dark Peak 1880s-1920s', *Historical Journal* 49, 4 (2006), 1125-53; Tebbutt, *Being Boys*.

[150] M. Roper and J. Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (1991), 2; Roper, 'Manliness and Masculinity'.

[151] Other sporting activities 'remained overwhelmingly a lower-middle- and skilled-working-class, youthful male activity' according to A. Warren, 'Sport, Youth and Gender in Britain, 1880-1940', in J. C. Binfield and J. Stevenson , eds., *Sport, Culture and Politics* (Sheffield, 1993), 67.

[152] R. A. Lambert, 'A Review of "A Claim on the Countryside" by Harvey Taylor', *Environment and History* 4, 1 (1998), 126.

[153] Shoard, *A Right to Roam*, 121-27. Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside'. T. Sharp, *Town and Country: Some Aspects of Urban and Rural Development* (Oxford, 1937), 105.

inhabitants, Scottish lairds also sought to prevent non-residents from walking on public rights of way, or exercising their customary right of access to open country.

As a result of these regional differences, the main aim of the access movement in the South of England was to preserve the relatively few remaining areas of unenclosed common land, particularly around London, and to protect the extensive network of linear public rights of way from illegal closure. In contrast, in the North and West of England and Scotland, the objective of the access movement shifted from protection of a much more limited network of existing rights of way to gaining the right to roam at will over uncultivated country.[154] The objectives of the northern access movement were therefore inherently more radical than the southern movement, in demanding the right to walk on privately-owned land.

For centuries, a customary right of access to uncultivated land existed across large parts of Britain. However, in the late nineteenth century, as lower transportation costs progressively undermined the profitability of domestic forestry and agriculture, many landowners sought alternative sources of income from sporting interests. In the South and the Midlands, farmers reared pheasants in unproductive woodland, while the heather moors of northern England were turned over to grouse, and huge areas of Scotland were transformed into deer forest. As food prices continued to fall, and an aspirational middle class continued to grow, rental income from these sporting activities became increasingly important and large areas of the Scottish Highlands and smaller parts of the Pennines were effectively closed to the public and patrolled by gamekeepers to prevent poaching and encourage the growth of the deer and grouse population.[155]

Within this generalised picture of North and South, the Lake District and, to a lesser extent, Snowdonia, occupy an anomalous position in the geography and history of the outdoor movement. Together with the Wye Valley, the status of the Lake District as a picturesque resort for the discerning visitor was well established, and it remained an upmarket tourist destination, capitalising on its literary associations, throughout the interwar years. As Dave Russell observes, 'cultural phenomena that do not fit into pre-existing ideas of what constitutes the "North" can…become detached from their real geographical moorings and…claimed as "southern" or "national"'. Since the nineteenth century, the southern intellectual elite, acting through the National Trust and other preservation societies, had taken an almost proprietorial interest in the Lakes,

[154] The latter objective is referred to as 'access to open country' in this thesis.
[155] See Shoard, *A Right to Roam*, 122-27.

acquiring large tracts of land and campaigning to preserve the landscape as a sublime 'other' to the Home Counties.[156] Neither deer nor grouse are native to the Lake District or Snowdonia, and attempts to introduce the latter failed. As a consequence, free access by pedestrians to the fells and mountains was widely tolerated. Moreover, in the relatively rare instances when landowners did seek to limit access, the economic and political influence of the local tourist industry typically triggered an immediate response.[157]

These regional variations resulted in very different perceptions of 'the access problem' by southern and northern walkers. While northerners were, in some cases, prevented from walking on Pennine moors that were visible from the streets where they lived, 'in the South the fame and beauty of the Lakes have tended to diminish knowledge and appreciation of the Pennine fells', and most southerners were simply unaware that access to open country was a problem.[158] As a result, many dismissed northern protests as 'local grievances'.

James Bryce's (born 1838) original Access to Mountains Bill (Scotland) in 1884 set the tenor of the access to open country debate for the next 116 years.[159] Those in favour used the utilitarian argument of the interests of the many versus the interests of the few. They also argued for the moral, spiritual and physical benefits of 'rational recreation', opportunistically invoking 'national efficiency' or military preparedness when contemporary circumstances allowed. Local Authorities, who were significant landowners in the Pennines, opposed public access on the grounds that it threatened to pollute water supplies, and both sides put forward economic arguments, comparing the relative contributions of grouse-shooting, deer-stalking and country walking to the rural economy. At its heart, however, access to open country was an ideological argument about private property, and the extent to which the ownership of land confers unlimited powers of exclusion. Many landowners tolerated trespassers crossing their land, but they strongly objected to any suggestion that walkers had a *right* to be there. Given the strong link between land and status, the access campaign inevitably had connotations of class conflict, as several historians have highlighted. However, this

[156] D. Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester, 2004), 55; R. Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (1991); J. K. Walton and J. Wood, eds., *The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as a Tourist Destination, 1750-2010* (Farnham, 2013).

[157] C. O'Neill, '"The Most Magical Corner of England": Tourism, Preservation and the Development of the Lake District 1919-39', in J. K. Walton, ed., *Histories of Tourism* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2005).

[158] *Observer*, 13 Mar. 1938.

[159] Until the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000.

thesis will show that while access disputes were very significant locally, on a national scale they played a minor role in the interwar development of the mass outdoor movement.

* * *

The unnatural generation gap created by the War distanced the leadership of institutions linked to the outdoor movement from a younger generation of walkers who discovered the countryside during the interwar years. Changing patterns of employment and the rapid expansion of the suburbs encouraged the development of energetic country walking as a distinct leisure activity, separated in both time and space from home and work. It was a pursuit that satisfied both female aspirations for a liberating, healthy pastime and male desires for an activity to replace the physical demands and fellowship that manual work had once provided. More importantly, the countryside provided a social space within which young people of both sexes could enjoy a high degree of individual and collective freedom. As young journalists championed the new activity, hiking became a nationwide 'craze', challenging the upper-middle- and upper-class cultural hegemony over the countryside and achieving a scale and cohesiveness that would have been impossible before the age of mass literacy, mass media and mass transportation. In the process, it acquired a distinct and self-conscious identity as a youth movement.

Chapter 3

Trampers and Preservationists

Illustration 4: Scottish Mountaineering Club, Easter Meet 1932, Tomich Hotel, Glen Affric. The Rev A. E. Robertson (president) is wearing a cap. Percy Unna, who donated Glencoe to the Scottish National Trust, is far left (SMC).

Helen Walker argues that the interwar mass outdoor movement arose as a result of the gradual 'trickle-down' of a pre-existing upper-middle-class, neo-romantic outdoor tradition. This chapter seeks to describe that tradition before evaluating, in Chapters 5 and 6, the evidence for the existence of a similar ethos within the interwar hiking movement and the YHA. It also investigates the demographics, values and behaviour of the upper-middle-class outdoor movement, to assess whether these were likely to encourage, or discourage, the assimilation of large numbers of young, mainly upper-working and lower-middle-class walkers into the neo-romantic tradition.

The upper-middle-class outdoor tradition was intimately linked to the growth of mountaineering as a prestigious, elite leisure activity in the mid-nineteenth century. While most enthusiasts did little more than hard walks, many aspired to be mountaineers, and the popularity of books written by leading alpinists played a central role in defining and disseminating the ethos of the movement. Unlike most hikers,

trampers and mountaineers organized themselves into formal clubs that kept detailed records of their activities. As a result, the upper-middle-class, neo-romantic tramping and mountaineering tradition is by far the best-documented and most-studied strand of the outdoor movement and, even today, 'the "Romantic Walk" and its variants…enjoy a dominant position within the [academic] literature on walking'.[1] Much of the material in this chapter is therefore familiar from other sources, but because previous studies emphasise continuity between the pre- and post-War periods, much less attention has been paid to the discontinuities that arose as result of the War.

This chapter will show that, as a result of the unnatural generation gap created by the War, many of the established upper-middle-class clubs became elderly, insular and conservative, and made little effort to accommodate the social and cultural changes described in Chapter 2. Disparities of age, class and, to some extent, region, suggest that there was very limited social interaction between members of the 'senior' clubs and participants in the mass outdoor movement. Moreover, as the achievements of individual upper-middle-class mountaineers were eclipsed, both at home and abroad, the prestige of the tramping and mountaineering strand diminished, and its cultural influence over the broader outdoor movement declined.

In addition to neo-romanticism, the upper-middle-class strand of the outdoor movement was also influenced by the pastoral tradition in British cultural life, which evolved, in response to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, into a preservation movement that saw the English countryside and traditional rural life as the embodiment of the nation's spiritual values. The preservation movement shared a common cultural heritage with the tramping movement and had significant overlapping membership before and after the War. As they became increasingly insular, many upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering clubs simply ignored individuals whose attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside differed from their own, but preservationists felt obliged to confront the perceived threat to the countryside posed by the rapid expansion and democratization of the outdoor movement. Developments within the preservation movement therefore provide evidence for the evolution of upper-middle-class values and attitudes during the interwar years, as well as important context for the discussion of the campaign for access to open country in Chapter 4.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this thesis defines the tramping movement in class terms. Between the wars, both generational and regional variations emerged within the upper-

[1] Bryant, Burns, and Readman, 'Modern Walks', in Bryant, Burns, and Readman eds., *Walking Histories*, 18.

middle-class strand of the outdoor movement but, throughout the period under review, tramping continued to be overwhelmingly a male activity. While two of the senior clubs did admit women, membership lists suggest that most were the wives or daughters of male members. Meanwhile, as Elizabeth Coxhead, an Oxford graduate born in 1909, observed: 'The established…clubs froze the ill-connected female beginner with a glance.'[2]

The Tramping and Mountaineering Tradition

The early history of the upper-middle-class, intellectual, outdoor movement, its cultural roots in the Romantic movement and the study of natural sciences, and the neo-romantic literary tradition that it gave rise to, have been widely discussed.[3] Before the War, lowland tramping was popularised through the walking-tour genre of literature.[4] However, in the absence of reliable maps or signposts, most pre-War recreational walkers stuck to the 'narrow roads, rutted by hooves and cart wheels…down which people passed rarely, and almost never for pleasure'.[5] It was only after the War, with the increased availability of Ordnance Survey maps and the rapid growth of motorised road transport, that recreational walking on field paths and across open country became the norm. As Alfred Brown observed in *Moorland Tramping in West Yorkshire* (1931): 'The whole literature of walking and walking tours, in which the English are richer than any other nation – in particular the essays of men like Stevenson and Hazlitt and W. H. Hudson – has become obsolete. These men, for the most part, walked on the road.'[6]

The upper-middle-class *cross-country* walking tradition, and particularly hill-walking on the relatively inaccessible mountains and moorlands of Britain, owed much to the late nineteenth-century development of mountaineering as a prestigious and elite leisure

[2] E. Coxhead, 'First Mountain', in *Mountain Panorama* (London: Max Parrish, 1955), 39.

[3] E.g. Solnit, *Wanderlust* ch. 6; Amato, *On Foot*, ch.3 and 4; D. Hollett, *The Pioneer Ramblers 1850-1940* (Manchester, 2002), ch. 9; Marples, *Shank's Pony*; and Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, ch.10. W. Noyce, *Scholar Mountaineers: Pioneers of Parnassus* (1950) traces the mountaineering tradition back to Petrarch. R. W. Clark and E. C. Pyatt, *Mountaineering in Britain* (1957), ch.1 and W. Unsworth, *Hold the Heights: The Foundations of Mountaineering* (1993), ch. 10, chart the transition from walking to mountaineering; A. D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature and English Culture* (Oxford, 1993) and R. Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke, 1997) discuss the literary tradition.

[4] E.g. Stevenson, 'Walking Tours', Cooper, *A Tramp's Schooling*; and Belloc, *The Footpath Way*.

[5] L. Lee, *Cider With Rosie*, 1977 ed., 216 (first pubd.1959); T. Rowley, *The English Landscape in the Twentieth Century* (2006), 11.

[6] Brown, *Moorland Tramping*, xi. H. Westacott, *The Walker's Handbook* (Harmondsworth,1978), 6.

activity.[7] As the *Spectator* observed in 1894: 'It is not in the Cumberland Fells that the taste for mountain-craft usually originates. It is the High Alps that make the first and obvious appeal to the uninitiated.'[8] The London-based Alpine Club, established in 1857, was at the centre of these developments. While the *raison d'être* of the Club was mountaineering in the Alps, and later the greater ranges, the ethos of its socially-elite membership was disseminated to the broader British outdoor movement through the popularity of its literature and a network of seven regional 'senior' clubs that its members helped to establish.

Recent academic studies of early British mountaineering emphasise themes of modernity, individualism, masculine identity and imperialism. Peter Hansen and Peter Bayers, for example, argue that mountaineering was an expression of assertive masculinity; while Ann Colley highlights imperialism, subjugation and conquest.[9] Most Victorian mountaineering books were written by, and about, a handful of leading male climbers, and their accounts make it clear that 'mountaineering has not escaped the baneful effects of human rivalry'.[10] However, most alpinists, including many at the forefront of the sport, also had other, more complex, motives for climbing, including a desire for solitude and self-discovery, and a pantheistic love of natural beauty.[11]

[7] R. L. G. Irving, *A History of British Mountaineering* (1955); R. W. Clark, *The Victorian Mountaineers* (1953); A. Lunn, *A Century of Mountaineering 1857-1957* (1957); Unsworth, *Hold the Heights*; J. Ring, *How the English Made the Alps* (2000); S. Thompson, *Unjustifiable Risk? The Story of British Climbing* (Milnthorpe, 2010); J. Westaway, 'The Origin and Development of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing Tourism in the Lake District, C1800-1914', in J.K. Walton and J. Wood, eds., *The Making of a Cultural Landscape* (2013).

[8] 'Climbing in England', *Spectator*, 7 July 1894, 12.

[9] P. H. Hansen, 'British Mountaineering 1850-1914' (PhD, Harvard, 1991); 'Modern Mountains: The Performative Consciousness of Modernity in Britain, 1870-1940', in M. Daunton and B. Rieger, eds., *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001); and 'Vertical Boundaries, National Identities: Victorian Mountaineering on the Frontiers of Europe and the Empire, 1868-1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24 (1996), 48-71. P. Bayers, *Imperial Ascent: Mountaineering, Masculinity, and Empire* (Boulder, 2003), 8. A. C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Farnham, 2010). See also R. Ellis, *Vertical Margins: Mountaineering and the Landscapes of Neoimperialism* (Wisconsin, 2001). P. Gilchrist, 'Gender and British Climbing Histories', *Sport* 33, 3 (2013), 223-35, contains a bibliography of the growing academic literature on mountaineering history.

[10] R. L. J. Irving, *History of British Mountaineering* (1955), 222.

[11] E.g. P. Readman, 'Walking and Environmentalism in the Career of James Bryce', in Bryant, Burns and Readman, eds., *Walking Histories*, 298; P. Readman, 'William Cecil Slingsby, Norway, and British Mountaineering, 1872-1914', *English Historical Review* 129, 540 (2014), 1098-1128; Willey, *Eighteenth Century Background*, 64. C. Roche, 'Women Climbers 1850-1900: A Challenge to Male Hegemony?', *Sport in History* 33 (2013), 236-59, also points out that many male climbers were accompanied by their wives and daughters, and a significant minority of female visitors in the second half of the nineteenth century climbed major alpine peaks.

Arnold Lunn argues that the greatest achievement of British alpinists was not so much as pioneers, but as popularisers of mountaineering.[12] Leslie Stephen (born 1832), one of the leading climbers during the 'golden age' of alpinism (1854-1865), president of the Alpine Club (1865-1868), and editor of the *Alpine Journal* (1868-1872), was particularly influential in both popularising the activity and establishing the upper-middle-class neo-romantic outdoor tradition. After a strict evangelical upbringing, Stephen renounced formal religion (and a fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge) but rediscovered in the mountains feelings of 'awe, terror and exultation once reserved for God'.[13] In his influential book, *The Playground of Europe* (1871), Stephen described the spiritual and aesthetic appeal of the mountains:

> The mountains represent the indomitable force of nature…they suggest not sheer misanthropy, as they did to Byron, or an outburst of revolutionary passion, as they did to his teacher Rousseau, but that sense of awe-struck humility which befits such petty creatures as ourselves…If I were to invent a new idolatry…I should prostrate myself, not before beast, or ocean, or sun, but before one of those mighty masses…Their voice is mystic…The loftiest and sweetest strains of Milton or Wordsworth may be more articulate, but they do not lay so forcible a grasp upon my imagination.[14]

Like many of his peers, Stephen regarded walking and mountaineering as an intellectual as well as a physical activity. He believed that 'appreciation of scenery, like that of art, requires careful study…To take a raw Londoner and, with no previous training of mind or eye, to place him in the midst of the finest scenery, is to subject him to an unfair trial.'[15] The neo-romantic tradition that Stephen helped to promulgate reached its apogee just before the War. In 1914, George Mallory (born 1886) wrote an article in the *Climbers' Club Journal* in which he asked: 'To what part of the artistic sense of man does mountaineering belong? To the part that causes him to be moved by music or painting, or to the part that makes him enjoy a game?' His response was unequivocal: 'Mountaineers of my sort…claim that something sublime is the essence of mountaineering. They can compare the call of the hills to the melody of wonderful music and the comparison is not ridiculous.'[16] Like Stephen, Mallory emphatically

[12] A. Lunn, 'The Playground of Europe 1871 to 1971', *AJ* 77 (1972), 3.
[13] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 260.
[14] L. Stephen, *Playground of Europe* (1871)181,197.
[15] L. Stephen, 'Vacations', *Cornhill Magazine* (1869) in *Men, Books and Mountains* (1956), 175.
[16] G. Mallory, 'The Mountaineer as Artist', *CCJ*, Mar. 1914.

rejected any rhetoric of conquest or subjugation: 'Have we vanquished an enemy? None but ourselves.'[17]

There was also a strong moral dimension to mountaineering and walking, influenced by the concept of 'muscular Christianity', which equated athleticism with moral health.[18] Stephen was 'much inclined to measure a man's moral excellence by his love of walking', while Katherine Chorley (née Hopkinson), part of the second generation of a famous Manchester mountaineering family, observed that her father and his brothers 'tried to contract for the kingdom of heaven by means of the laborious days they lived on earth'.[19] The ethos of the upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering tradition was perhaps best summed up by Stephen's biographer, Frederic Maitland, who described 'an occasional bout of serious walking' as a 'physical, intellectual and moral necessity'.[20]

This ethos was disseminated to the broader outdoor movement through the popularity of books written by alpinists and a network of seven regional 'senior' clubs (often referred to as the 'gentlemen's clubs' in histories of the outdoor movement), founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nearly all of which were either established, or presided over, by members of the Alpine Club.[21] The main activity of these clubs was hard walking, but many members aspired to be mountaineers and maintained the conceit that their activities in the British hills were merely preparation for the more exclusive and prestigious activity of Alpine climbing.

The Climbers' Club, founded in 1898 by Charles Mathews (born 1834), president of the Alpine Club from 1878 to 1881, was conceived as a national club but later came to be particularly associated with climbing in North Wales.[22] Over one third of the 200 original members were also members of the Alpine Club and it developed close ties with the Cambridge and Oxford University Mountaineering Clubs, established in 1905 and 1909 respectively.[23] As in the Alpine Club, election was by a members' ballot, and at the inaugural dinner Mathews made clear what sort of candidates he expected to be

[17] 'Mont Blanc from the Col du Géant', *AJ* 32 (1918), 148. John Hunt, leader of the 1953 Everest expedition, maintained the tradition. His publisher wanted the title of the expedition book to be 'The Conquest of Everest'; Hunt insisted upon 'The Ascent of Everest'.

[18] S. Collini, '"Manly Fellows": Fawcett, Stephen and the Liberal Temper', in *The Blind Victorian: Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge, 2003), 54. D. E. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, 1994); B. Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Harvard, 1978).

[19] K. Chorley, *Manchester Made Them* (1950), 53.

[20] F. W. Maitland, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (1906), 364.

[21] Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 18.

[22] www.climbers-club.co.uk, (12 Mar. 2016).

[23] D. Walker, 'Evolution of Climbing Clubs in Britain', *AJ* 109 (2004), 188.

put forward when he opined that mountaineering 'is a sport that from some mysterious cause appeals mainly to the cultivated intellect. 'Arry or 'Arriet would never climb a hill.'[24]

The Leeds-based Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, established in 1892, was the first regional mountaineering club in England. Cecil Slingsby was president from 1893 to 1902 and numerous other prominent members of the Alpine Club were elected as honorary members.[25] Across the Pennines, the first four presidents of the Manchester Rucksack Club (established 1902) were all members of the Alpine Club, including Charles Pilkington, who served as president of the Alpine Club from 1896 to 1899, and Sir Alfred Hopkinson MP, of the prominent Manchester climbing family.[26] The Club included an 'uncanny proportion of lawyers' among its members, but its gatherings were accompanied by 'bursts of boyish glee, such as would shock our City clients'.[27]

The Fell & Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District (FRCC), established in 1906, was socially more inclusive. Its first president, Ashley Abraham, was a Keswick-based photographer and shopkeeper, and the Club admitted female members from the outset.[28] In contrast, the Alpine Club and the other senior clubs, except for the Aberdeen-based Cairngorm Club (which admitted women members from 1896), remained all-male until the 1970s or later.[29] The relatively broad social base of the FRCC arose partly as a result of its later foundation, but also reflected the strength of the local outdoor community. Its members included local 'dalesmen', such as John Robinson (born 1853), a member of a yeoman farming family; George Basterfield (born 1877), a grocer and future mayor of the industrial enclave of Barrow-in-Furness; and numerous Lancastrian industrialists.[30] At that time the northern boundary of the county extended well into the southern Lake District, and many Lancastrians regarded the Lakes as 'their mountains'. In contrast, the exclusivity of the Climbers' Club deterred most members of the local community in North Wales from seeking membership, although one or two, such as Archer Thomson (born 1863), a school teacher from Bangor, did gain admission.

[24] A. Hankinson, *The Mountain Men* (1977), 94.
[25] www.yrc.org.uk (28 Feb. 2016).
[26] www.rucksackclub.org (12 Mar. 2016); J. Beatty, ed., *This Mountain Life: The First Hundred Years of the Rucksack Club* (Bamford, 2003).
[27] E. Burns, 'The Coming of Age of the Club', *RCJ* (1923), 1, 5 and 11.
[28] www.frcc.co.uk (12 Mar. 2016); H. M. Kelly, J. H. Doughty, and others, '100 Years of Rock-Climbing in the Lake District', *FRCCJ* XXIV (2), 70 (1986).
[29] The Wayfarers' Club, founded in Liverpool in 1906, remains an all-male club today. www.wayfarersclub.org (12 Mar. 2016).
[30] G. Basterfield, *Mountain Lure* (Kendal, 1947); G. S. Bower, 'George Basterfield', *FRCCJ* 25, 3 (1950).

Ken Crocket argues that the alpine tradition was less influential in Scotland, claiming that there were fewer than 25 active alpinists in Scotland before 1900.[31] However, the social composition of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC), established in Edinburgh in 1889, was very similar to that of the Alpine Club.[32] Of the 100 original members, 12 were doctors, 11 were professors, 8 were knights or baronets, 2 were MPs and 14 were also members of the Alpine Club. Likewise, the first president of the Cairngorm Club, founded two years earlier in 1887, was the access campaigner and preservationist James Bryce MP (later Viscount Bryce), who also served as president of the Alpine Club from 1899 to 1902.[33]

From its beginnings, a large part of the appeal of the upper-middle-class mountaineering tradition was its exclusivity. Stephen self-deprecatingly observed that 'alpine exploits require less physical prowess than any other sport', but even a 'weedy and invertebrate masher…hauled up a steep peak by a couple of burly guides' was accorded considerable prestige by the general public, because of the novelty and apparent danger of the activity.[34] As Anthony Trollope observed in 1866, the Alpine Club Man

> does not carry himself quite as an another man, and has his nose a little in the air, even when he is not climbing…To be one of a class permitted to face dangers which to us would be suicidal, does give him a conscious divinity of which he is, in his modesty, not quite able to divest himself.[35]

However, by publicising their activities in books and essays the pioneers inevitably 'made proselytes in every direction to the new creed; and ended, alas! by rubbing off the bloom of early romance, and laying the whole country open to the incursions of the ordinary tourist'.[36]

Joseph Amato observes that, in order to preserve the social cachet of the activity, 'walking…underwent a differentiation associated with…[the] skills, equipment, and costs required to perform a particular form of it …with prestige derived from higher risk,

[31] K. Crocket, *Mountaineering in Scotland: The Early Years* (Edinburgh, 2015), 23.
[32] www.smc.org.uk (12 Mar. 2016); Wedderburn, 'Short History of Scottish Climbing'; W. D. Brooker, ed., *A Century of Scottish Mountaineering* (Edinburgh, 1988).
[33] www.cairngormclub.org.uk (12 Mar. 2016). Readman, 'James Bryce'. S. Murray, *The Cairngorm Club* (Aberdeen,1987).
[34] Lunn, 'The Playground of Europe', 5; Mary Mummery writing in A. F. Mummery, *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus*, 2004 ed., 65 (first pubd.1895).
[35] A. Trollope, *Travelling Sketches* (1866), 93.
[36] L. Stephen, 'A Substitute for the Alps', *National Review* (1894), in Stephen, *Men, Books and Mountains*, 204.

more exotic travel, greater cost, and international flavor'.[37] When the Alpine Club was founded in the 1850s, the object of the sport was to reach the summit by the easiest possible route, and the pioneers were able to 'conquer' numerous 'virgin peaks' without recourse to serious climbing.[38] As strenuous walking became commonplace, the younger and more ambitious members of the senior clubs focused on more specialised and potentially dangerous activities, such as rock- and ice-climbing, and, notably in the case of the Yorkshire Ramblers, potholing. As technical standards rose, and the supply of readily accessible unclimbed peaks diminished, the time commitment required of leading practitioners became increasingly incompatible with the gentleman amateur tradition, resulting in the gradual professionalization of the sport. However, as discussed below, the demography of the senior clubs indicates that ambitious young climbers operating at the leading edge of the sport were the exception during the interwar years, and the main outdoor activity of the 'gentlemen's clubs' continued to be strenuous walking.

All the senior clubs produced journals, modelled on the *Alpine Journal*, which collectively provide a remarkable record of the upper-middle-class mountaineering and walking tradition in Britain, demonstrating the persistence of many Victorian and Edwardian attitudes into the interwar years and beyond. But as a record of the actual activities of the majority of club members, the journals are profoundly misleading. The annual programmes and records of 'meets' show that mountain and moorland walks were the staple activity.[39] Several of the senior clubs also had large 'London Sections' that arranged walks in the Home Counties during the summer months, and lectures and dinners during the winter. In contrast, articles appearing in the club journals overwhelmingly describe exceptional events, such as new rock climbs in Britain, or visits to the Alps and greater ranges. The same names regularly appear as the authors of both the articles and of the new routes, suggesting a small minority of activists, while the silent majority were content to repeat a few relatively easy routes in Britain or the Alps, or to go on long walks through the British countryside. Echoing the nineteenth-century competitive sport of 'pedestrianism', walking in Britain was only considered worthy of mention in the club journals when it involved exceptionally long distances or time trials. During the interwar years, for example, members of the FRCC and the Rucksack Club competed to see how many Lakeland peaks they could climb within 24

[37] Amato, *On Foot*, Conclusion, 'Stepping Out', para.4.

[38] A. Burns, 'Accidents Will Happen: Risk, Climbing and Pedestrianism in the "Golden Age" of Mountaineering, 1850-1865', in Bryant, Burns and Readman, eds., *Walking Histories*.

[39] See *CaCJ, CCJ, FRCCJ, RCJ, SMCJ, Wayfarers' Club Journal, CJ* and *YRJ*. Most of the senior clubs kept records of participants and activities undertaken on 'meets'. Some journals contain annual summaries of club activities.

hours. The Rucksack Club also devised numerous arduous walks over the peat moors of the southern Pennines.[40]

In addition to helping to shape the ethos of the mountaineering establishment, Stephen also had a profound influence on the development of lowland tramping. After renouncing hard alpine climbing in 1879, he formed the Sunday Tramps, one of the earliest walking clubs in England and 'an archetypal expression of the late Victorian intellectual aristocracy'.[41] The Sunday Tramps was a loose network of sixty mountaineering and intellectual friends, including James Bryce and George Meredith, who went on long walks through the Home Counties, stopping for lunch at country pubs. When Stephen ceased to act as 'guide' (there was no president) in 1891, he was succeeded by Sir Frederick Pollock, an eminent lawyer, and Douglas Freshfield, who served as president of both the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society. The original Sunday Tramps broke up in 1895, but the historian George Trevelyan, whose father Sir George Otto had been a member, resurrected the club in 1900.[42]

The quality and quantity of literature produced by members of the 'gentlemen's clubs' has given the upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering tradition a prominence in historical accounts of the outdoor movement that is certainly not justified by numbers alone. In the absence of guidebooks and other sources of information, most aspiring mountaineers joined a club before the Second World War but, excluding multiple memberships (of which there were many), the total number of people who were a member of one or more of the senior clubs was less than 3,000 (see Table 1) and, given the age profile, the active membership was probably substantially less.

[40] J. Westaway, '"Men Who Can Last": Mountaineering Endurance, the Lake District Fell Records and the Campaign for Everest 1919-1924', *Sport in History* 33, 3 (2013), 223-35.

[41] www.oxforddnb.com/themes (11 Oct.2014); Maitland, *Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, ch.17.

[42] Trevelyan (born 1876), who did much to perpetuate Stephen's legacy, was described by Leonard Woolf as a 'muscular agnostic' (D. Cannadine, *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History* (1992), 145).

Table 1: Membership of Senior Clubs 1914-1939

	1914	1920	1930	1939	Increase/ (Decrease) 1914-39
Alpine Club	722	638	691	669	(7%)
Cairngorm Club	152	153	251	266	75%
Climbers' Club	231	160	298	467	102%
Fell & Rock Climbing Club	230	380	630	713	235%
Rucksack Club	138	153	228	264	91%
Scottish Mountaineering Club	200	196	261	304	52%
Wayfarers' Club	138	136	248	255	84%
Yorkshire Ramblers	131	135	161	159	21%
Total	1,942	1,951	2,768	3,097	59%

Sources: The AC produced an annual reconciliation of members joining, resigning or dying. CaC data provided by Ken Thomson, 11 Mar. 2016. CC data provided by David Metcalf, 1 Mar. 2016 (1920 estimate based on low point of 153 in 1923; 1939 estimate based on 467 in 1945). FRCC data provided by Chris Sherwin, 2 Mar. 2016. RC data provided by Mike Dent, 6 Mar. 2016. SMC data provided by Robin Campbell, 29 Feb. 2016. WC data provided by Richard Dickinson, 11 Apr. 2016 (leaving dates are incomplete prior to 1928). For YR see www.yrc.org.uk/yrcweb/index.php/theclub-menu/club-history-menu/past-members.

Furthermore, with the exception of the more socially-inclusive FRCC, none of the senior clubs experienced the dramatic growth that took place in the broader outdoor movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Indeed, membership of the Alpine Club actually shrank. Nevertheless, by virtue of its historic prestige and social connections, the Club continued to exert a strong influence over the development of the outdoor movement, ensuring that 'the traditions and beliefs, the practices and the prejudices of this august body were…closely woven into the fabric of British climbing', as Ronald Clark and Edward Pyatt observed in 1957.[43]

[43] Clark and Pyatt, *Mountaineering in Britain*, 26. In this context, Clark and Pyatt were probably referring to 'climbing' as distinct from 'walking'. After WW2, outdoor writers sought to distinguish between 'hill walking', 'scrambling' (which requires the use of hands) and 'climbing' (where a rope is used). During the interwar years these distinctions were less clear cut.

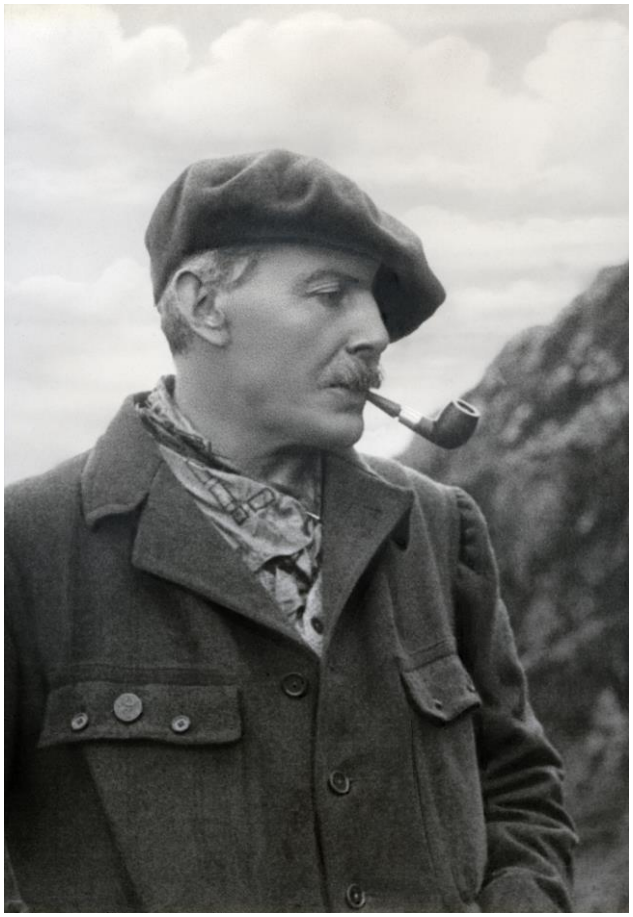

Illustration 5: Geoffrey Winthrop Young, 1934 (AC).

In the years immediately before and after the War, Geoffrey Winthrop Young (born 1876), a leading alpinist, poet and self-proclaimed 'athletic aesthete', became one of the most influential organisers of the upper-middle-class outdoor movement. Like Stephen, he built an informal network of friends and acquaintances whose impact on the subsequent development of the outdoor, access and preservation movements was out of all proportion to their number.[44] Young was born into the upper-middle-class outdoor tradition. The second son of Sir George Young, a mountaineer, Liberal and friend of Leslie Stephen and George Otto Trevelyan, he formed a life-long friendship with George M. Trevelyan at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1897, the two undergraduates walked from Trinity to Marble Arch (a distance of 54 miles) in a single day, just as their fathers had done in 1858. In 1898, they arranged a university reading party at Seatoller House in the Lake District where, inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (1886), they devised an energetic 'manhunt', in which twelve 'hounds' pursued four 'hares' over the Lakeland fells, and in 1907, Young invited a

[44] A. Hankinson, *Geoffrey Winthrop Young: Poet, Mountaineer, Educator* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1995); D. Cox, 'The Life and Times of Geoffrey Winthrop Young', *Mountain*, 47 (1976).

group of friends to spend the Easter weekend at the Pen-y-Pass hotel at the top of the Llanberis Pass.[45] Both the Lake District 'manhunts' and the Easter meets at Pen-y-Pass became an annual tradition.

In the immediate pre- and post-War years, the Pen-y-Pass meets, in particular, became the social equivalent of the Sunday Tramps, bringing together trampers, mountaineers and members of the intellectual and political elite. In total, Young invited over 600 guests (many of whom went year after year) including fourteen members of the Trevelyan family, Duncan Grant, Julian and Aldous Huxley, John Maynard Keynes and Ernest Rutherford. In later life, members of the Pen-y-Pass parties earned three Orders of Merit and four Nobel Prizes, five became cabinet ministers, eight were made peers and fifteen were knighted.[46] Young also invited numerous members of the Climbers' Club, of which he was elected president in 1913. Writing in 1948, he remembered the immediate pre-War years as the most successful in the Club's history:

> We were prospering and attracting remarkable recruits…Sir Foster Cunliffe, Oxford historian, cricketer and Fellow of All Souls…Charles Donald Robertson a few years before him, Fellow of Trinity, oar, scholar, poet and already spoken of as the future head of the Civil Service…Athletes and men of varied abilities, they well represented…the social tradition which gave grace to Club meetings and to the more leisured gatherings for climbing.[47]

The pre-War meets had a vigorous masculine character, with more than a hint of homo-eroticism. Robert Graves recalled a visit in the spring of 1914: 'We used to take a leisurely breakfast and lie in the sun with a tankard of beer before starting for the precipice on foot in the late morning…In the evening when we got back to the hotel, we lay and stewed in hot baths.'[48] Young's scrapbooks contain photographs of naked young men smoking pipes in the steamy communal bath house at the hotel, nude bathing in mountain lakes, George Mallory climbing naked on the sea-cliffs of Cornwall and Siegfried Herford (the best British rock climber before the War and, like Mallory, a strikingly handsome man) standing naked in a rowing boat on Lac Léman during the summer of 1914.[49] Then, as Young wrote,

[45] www.seatollerhouse.co.uk (16 Apr.2016). Hankinson, *Geoffrey Winthrop Young*, 46.
[46] G. W. Young, G. Sutton, and W. Noyce, *Snowden Biography* (1957), 41.
[47] G. W. Young, 'Genesis to Numbers', *CCJ* VIII (3), 73 (1948), 246.
[48] Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, 67.
[49] Young's *PyP Scrapbooks* are in the AC archives (AC C110).

> the war came; and it eliminated much of the more leisured class, and destroyed the balance between work and cultivated leisure. It altered the conditions of mountaineering no less than all our other circumstances, and it shuffled the social elements from which climbers were drawn.[50]

During the War, the *Alpine Journal* was reduced to the reminiscences of old men, while the university clubs ceased to function altogether: 'As a natural consequence of the War, the Oxford [University] Mountaineering Club ceased to exist.'[51] The death toll among members of the Oxford and Cambridge university clubs was probably higher than among Oxbridge graduates and undergraduates as a whole (where it was one in four), because nearly all young climbers were fit enough to serve in combat units.[52] The impact on the senior clubs was initially less pronounced. All of them were well-established by 1914, and many members were too old to serve in the armed forces. Of the FRCC membership of 230 in 1914, 68 served in the War and 19 died. 55 of the 131 members of Yorkshire Ramblers in 1914 served; 5 were killed and 3 were seriously injured. In Scotland, 60 out of the 200 members of the SMC joined the armed forces and 13 were killed. As the longest established club, the Alpine Club also had the oldest membership. Of the 716 members in 1914, more than half had been elected before 1900 and were therefore in their late-thirties or older when War broke out. Just 23 members of the Club died in action, but the membership decreased by far more between 1914 and 1920, as older members died and fewer young men joined.

As a result of the War, the generational balance between young and old fundamentally shifted in all of the senior clubs. After listing the nine members of the Cairngorm Club who had died in the War, Robert Anderson noted in 1918 that 'we deplore their loss, more especially as, being nearly all young men, they were the most active members of the Club.'[53] In 1914, 31 per cent of Alpine Club members had joined the Club within the previous ten years – typically the most active years for members. By 1920, that proportion had dropped to 19 per cent, while nearly half had been members for 20 years or more, suggesting that they were in the forties or older.[54]

Young was 38 when the War broke out, but both by profession (before the War he had been a teacher at Eton) and by inclination, he maintained strong ties with the younger

[50] Young, Sutton, and Noyce, *Snowden Biography*, 43.
[51] E.g. M. Conway, 'Some Reminiscences of an Old Stager', *AJ* 31 (1917). R. E. C Houghton, *Oxford and Cambridge Mountaineering* (1921), 90.
[52] Winter, *The Great War*, 25, 73, 97.
[53] Murray, *Cairngorm Club*, 82.
[54] Calculated from the annual membership lists of the AC.

generation. During the War he worked first as a war correspondent for the *Daily News*, then helped to establish the Friends Ambulance unit at Ypres, and finally joined the British Ambulance unit in Italy, where he was seriously wounded and had a leg amputated. At Ypres in 1916, Young remembered his climbing friends and former pupils who had died:

> I saw in passing Twiggy Anderson, the perfect hurdler and lively scholar, again an Eton pupil; Terence Hickman of Kings, good friend of so many mountaineers; and J. Raphael the football player, whom I took to Wales to climb, and who ran hard up the steep slopes of all his mountains…They were killed very near to us, and the news came slowly and fatally. The toll of tragic loss, and not only among climbing friends, kept mounting. Dearest of all, Wilbert Spencer at La Bassée, Kenneth Powell the classic athlete, Nigel Madan a close friend, Werner of Kings, cousins John and Horas Kennedy. On other fronts, C. K. Carfrae, Guy Butlin, the brothers Rupert and Basil Brooke, Julian and Billy Grenfell.[55]

In 1917, he wrote to Eleanor (Len) Slingsby, his future wife: 'They are *all* gone: all the men I had seen grow up, all those with heart, courage and vitality; all those I had thought to grow old among…And the earth stays full of the worthless, and the parasitic, and the miserable unvital dull fools.'[56]

While some pre-War walkers and mountaineers took up the sport again after the War, many did not.[57] Immediately after the War, the British countryside might have been seen by returning servicemen as a place of sanctuary and healing, but not as a place to take risks. Bill Murray (born 1913), a leading Scottish mountaineer and preservationist, analysed the decline of the outdoor movement, and particularly of climbing, in the immediate post-War years:

> My contemporaries and I had been war babies…We entered, uncritically, a social environment newly and strongly biased against more risk to life…When we came to the mountains [we found them] untrammelled by our elders and betters. The mountains were ours. We were free. It never occurred to us…that

[55] G. W. Young, *The Grace of Forgetting* (1953), 266.

[56] Letter to Len Slingsby in Aug.1917, following the death of her brother Lawrence, quoted in A. Hankinson, *A Century on the Crags* (1988), 192.

[57] A similar pattern emerged in Germany. One in four of the 14,000 members of the *Wandervögel* who served during the War were killed. Less than half of the survivors took up walking, camping and other outdoor activities after the War. W. Z. Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (1962), 97.

> our performance was handicapped by an unnatural generation gap…We had this excuse, that in the 1920s climbing in Scotland was to all appearances dead.

According to Murray, the community of walkers and climbers shrank in the immediate post-War years 'not just from the long casualty lists, but also from a sapping of psychic vigour by trench warfare. Men who had survived that ordeal had had a bellyful of risk and rough living. They wanted no more of it.'[58] Joanna Bourke's analysis in *Dismembering the Male* (1996) broadly aligns with Murray's thesis. She argues that returning servicemen were 'likely to view their surprising survival as a lucky and joyous opportunity to create a sphere of comfortable domesticity'.[59]

Even those with no visible wounds were scarred by the War.[60] In *The Realities of War* (1920), Philip Gibbs observed that many returning servicemen were subject to 'queer tempers, fits of profound depression alternating with a restless desire for pleasure'.[61] Robert Graves (Mallory's best man), gave up outdoor activities in the immediate post-War years: 'When I was strong enough to climb the hill behind Harlech and revisit my favourite country, I could not help seeing it as a prospective battlefield…I realized that my climbing days were over.'[62] Charles Montague, climber and leader writer for the *Manchester Guardian*, described the loss of enthusiasm felt by many of the War generation: 'Most of us…find that effort is less fun than it was, and many things somewhat dull that used to sparkle with interest…old hobbies…look at times as if they might only have been, at the best, rather much ado about nothing.'[63] As Vera Brittain observed in 1933, the War had robbed her, and her generation, of their youth.[64]

In 1921, Francis Younghusband (born 1863) used his presidential address at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) to propose an expedition to climb Everest.[65] A joint committee of the RGS and the Alpine Club was formed to organise an expedition, but as the veteran Himalayan explorer Tom Longstaff observed: 'Owing to the War the

[58] W. H. Murray, 'Scotland: The 1930s', *Mountain*, 98 (1984), 18.
[59] Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 20.
[60] M. Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester, 2009), 5.
[61] P. Gibbs, *Realities of War* (1920), 445.
[62] Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, 298, 307.
[63] Montague, *Disenchantment*, 208. J. Westaway, 'Mountaineering and the Re-Enchantment of Modernity: C. E. Montague and the Promotion of the Outdoor Movement in the Manchester Guardian 1890-1925' (paper presented at the *University of Kent History Seminar*, 2004); P. Gilchrist, 'Mountains, Manliness and Post-War Recovery: C. E. Montague's "Action"', *Sport in History* 33, 3 (2013), 282-302.
[64] Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, 171.
[65] P. French, *Younghusband*, 1995 ed., 329 (first pubd.1994).

supply of young climbers is less than formerly.'[66] When the expedition left England in 1921, the two lead climbers, Harold Raeburn (born 1865) and Alexander Kellas (born 1868), were both in their fifties. George Mallory, at 35, was one of the youngest. In recognition of his role in both the 1921 and 1922 Everest expeditions, Mallory was elected president of the Climbers' Club in 1923, but by then membership had shrunk from 231 in 1914 to a low point of 153, and there was talk of the Club being wound up. The *Climbers' Club Journal* – a vital tool for keeping the widely dispersed membership in touch with its activities – did not appear in 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1922 and 1924. The Climbers' Club was not alone in being slow to recover. The *Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal* ceased publication from 1914 to 1921: 'The interval of nearly seven years…has made the [1921] issue a memorial…of familiar names and good comrades whom we have lost.'[67] The Wayfarers' Club noted that 'the Great War produced a definite set-back… and not until several years after the termination of hostilities was the life of the Club re-established upon definite progressive lines', while in Scotland 'the Cairngorm Club continued to arrange regular walking excursions…[but] it would be five or six years before the gulf left by the Great War would be filled and…young men and women would be seeking their own new climbs'.[68] By the time that interest in the outdoors rekindled in the mid-1920s, a significant generation-gap had opened up between the pre-War members of established clubs and the new post-War generation of walkers and climbers.

The resurgence in interest in the outdoor movement coincided with the extraordinary publicity surrounding the Everest expeditions in 1921, 1922 and 1924. The 1921 reconnaissance generated considerable media interest, which only intensified when the first serious attempt on the summit was made the following year. John Buchan, author, politician and propaganda adviser to the government during the War, was appointed to manage the media and succeeded in keeping the expedition on the front pages despite civil war in Ireland, a famine in Russia that killed an estimated five million, Italy's invasion of Libya, and Egypt's independence from Britain.[69] Even the Chief Scout gave his endorsement, describing climbing as 'ripping good sport'.[70] Two years later, Mallory and Irvine disappeared near the summit.

[66] W. Davis, *Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory and the Conquest of Everest* (2011), 130.
[67] *YRCJ* (1921), IV, 14, 203.
[68] *WCJ* (1928), 103; G. Strange, *The Cairngorms: 100 Years of Mountaineering* (Edinburgh, 2010), 26. H. R. C. Carr, 'The Twilight in the 1920's', *CCJ* VIII (3) (1948), 249. C. Steven, *The Story of Scotland's Hills* (1975), 126.
[69] Davis, *Into the Silence*, 454. See AC and RGS news clippings from the period.
[70] R. Baden-Powell, *Rovering to Success: A Guide for Young Manhood* (1922), 44.

Following the indiscriminate carnage of the First World War, Bourke makes the observation that, 'deaths that epitomized manly valour' were urgently needed 'in a world seen to be desperately in need of heroism'.[71] Mallory and Irvine's romantic quest to reach the highest point on earth fulfilled this need, and their disappearance 'enveloped by cloud' had an almost redemptive quality.

> Such are the temporal princes, fear and pain
> Whose borders march with the ice-fields of death,
> And from the servitude escape there's none
> Till in the grave we set up house alone
> And buy our liberty with our last breath.[72]

Everest was instantly dubbed the 'finest cenotaph in the world' and a wreath of bay leaves was laid upon a scale model of the mountain at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in Wembley, which was visited by 27 million people.[73] In mountaineering, newspaper editors had discovered a 'moral equivalent of war'; a new image of British heroism to replace the martial ardour of the Edwardian era. Before the War, public interest in expeditions was largely confined to African or polar exploration.[74] After 1924, media interest in climbing never subsided and the year marked the beginning of the renaissance of the outdoor movement after a long post-War lull.

On the day of Mallory and Irvine's disappearance, Young unveiled a War memorial on the summit of Great Gable in the Lake District. The previous year, the FRCC had acquired 3,000 acres of land above the 1,500ft contour line around Wasdale Head, which they donated to the National Trust as a memorial to the 19 members of the Club lost in the War (seven of whom had been guests at Pen-y-Pass).[75] The *FRCC Journal* recorded that 'if ever there is any communion with the spirits of dead warriors, surely they were very near that silent throng of climbers, hill-walkers, and dalesfolk who assembled in soft rain and rolling mist on the high crest of Great Gable'.[76] The coincidence of Mallory's death and the unveiling might be taken to symbolize the end of an era defined by climbers and walkers drawn from the pre-War and War-generation, and the start of the post-War mass outdoor movement.

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[71] Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, 247. Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*, 357.
[72] C. Day Lewis, 'But Two There Are', from *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933).
[73] By Howard Somerville, a member of the expedition, W. Unsworth, *Everest* (1981), 115. Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets*, 300.
[74] See F. Spufford, *I May Be Some Time* (1996).
[75] 'Unveiling of the FRCC War Memorial', *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Oct. 1923; G. E. H. Rawlins, 'A Gift to the Nation and the Access to Mountains Bill', *Town Planning Review* 11, 1 (1924), 18; *PyP Scrapbook* (1924).
[76] W. T. Palmer, 'Unveiling the War Memorial Tablet', *FRCCJ* 6, 3 (1924).

Illustration 6: Dedication of the FRCC War Memorial on Great Gable, 8 June 1924 (FRCC).

Young moved to Cambridge at the end of 1924 and tried to re-establish some semblance of continuity in the upper-middle-class mountaineering tradition. Jack Longland, then president of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, recalled that Young's house 'was the centre for all the most active, ambitious and no doubt insufferable young Cambridge climbers'.[77] Despite the hiatus caused by the War, under Young's influence, many post-War Oxbridge climbers felt part of a continuing tradition. Young invited them to Pen-y-Pass, where they mingled with the pre-War and War-generation, but the balance between young and old had shifted, and the character of the meets progressively changed. As Young observed: 'After a period of almost ascetic climbing rigour, [they] developed a highly social character, owing to the wit and distinction of those taking part.'[78] Under Len Young's influence, an increasing number of women joined the parties. In 1921, she co-founded and became president of the Pinnacle Club – the first all-female climbing club in Britain.[79] The Club held a joint meet at Pen-y-Pass at Easter 1923, and by 1925 the growing popularity of climbing among upper-middle-class women had even caught the attention of *Country Life*.[80] But the absence of the 'lost generation', intermediating between young and old, came to be

[77] Hankinson, *Geoffrey Winthrop Young*, 243.
[78] *PyP Scrapbook* (1896-1914), handwritten entry added at a later date.
[79] The Ladies' SMC and the Ladies' Alpine Club pre-dated the Pinnacle but were sub-sections of male clubs.
[80] *Country Life*, 22 Aug.1925, 273.

more keenly felt and the post-War generation started to chafe at a culture dominated by old men and old ideas.

In the case of the Climbers' Club, the break with tradition came in 1925 with the purchase of Helyg – a 'miserable hovel' in the Ogwen valley – where the post-War generation started to establish their own culture and traditions.[81] The Rucksack Club had opened a climbing hut in Snowdonia in 1912 – the first in Britain – to provide members with basic accommodation, but it fell into disuse during the War and was closed in 1920. Helyg was the first hut to be opened after the War, and the initiative was swiftly followed by the other senior clubs. Before the advent of youth hostels in 1930, such huts represented the only alternative to camping for young climbers who could not afford, or did not wish, to stay in expensive inns. Helyg was almost exclusively used by the post-War generation and brought the mainly Oxbridge members of the Climbers' Club into social contact with young northern members of the Wayfarers' Club in Liverpool and the Rucksack Club in Manchester, some of whom joined the Climbers' Club simply to gain access.[82] Early accounts of Helyg in the *Climbers' Club Journal* feature lots of student humour, and character studies of fellow members, but little climbing. Later, as the 'northern rock climbers' started to predominate, the climbing received more serious attention.

Across the country, young, mainly middle-class, walkers and climbers started to establish their own clubs. The Junior Mountaineering Club of Scotland (JMCS) was founded in 1925 as a youthful alternative to the elderly and cliquey Scottish Mountaineering Club. By 1939, it had sections in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth, Inverness and London and was almost as large as the senior Club.[83] University clubs were formed at Manchester (1928), Imperial College (1929), Liverpool (1930) and Sheffield (1933). Nearly all the members of these clubs were part of the post-War generation, and while some may have read the classic mountaineering books, including Stephen, relatively few had social connections with the pre-War mountaineering tradition.

The expansion and increasing mobility of the interwar outdoor movement highlighted the regional variations that had developed within the tramping and mountaineering strand. While upper-middle-class mountaineers based in London, Oxford and

[81] Perrin, *Menlove*, 24; 'Helyg', *CCJ*, III, 1, 132.
[82] E.g. See accounts in G. Milburn, *Helyg* (1985); S. Dean, *Hands of a Climber* (Glasgow,1993), ch.2.
[83] www.edinburghjmcs.org.uk/pdfs/jmcshistory (25 Mar. 2016); A. G. Hutchison, 'The Beginning of the J.M.C.S.', *SMCJ* 30, 166 (1975).

Cambridge typically made relatively infrequent visits to the Lakes, Snowdonia or Scotland, at Easter or Christmas, and spent the summer in the Alps, many of the younger members of senior clubs in the North visited the British hills almost every weekend. As a result, fitness and technical standards rose rapidly and the 'gentleman amateur', for whom climbing was just one of many leisure activities, could no longer compete. Longland was among several southern-based climbers to observe this growing trend: 'At Helyg we began to meet the regular week-enders, and to realise increasingly that the future of Welsh climbing lay with them.'[84] It was not just in Wales where the traditional elite lost their pre-eminence. In the Alps too, young climbers from Germany, Austria and Italy, living close to the mountains, were responsible for nearly all the major interwar developments. Gradually, a new caste system began to develop, 'based, not upon rank, but upon performance' and the Oxbridge-dominated, upper-middle-class strand of the outdoor movement started to lose prestige.[85]

Even alpine climbing began to lose some of its social cachet, as 'ordinary' middle-class people were able to afford holidays abroad, and alpine resorts became increasingly crowded. Partly as a result, holiday preferences among the young elite underwent a seasonal inversion. In Edwardian times, the French Riviera was regarded as a winter resort, while the Alps were a summer resort. During the interwar years, with the growing fetish for sunbathing, the Mediterranean became a fashionable summer resort, while 'winter sports' became the new vogue for active, young members of the upper-middle class.[86] As Sir Martin Conway, former president of the Alpine Club, observed, the great advantage of the Alps in winter was its exclusivity: 'The ordinary tourist is absent; the crowd of loungers and trippers is away at home at its business and the whole country and all the mountains and hillsides are free to those active-bodied and minded people for whom the mountains are the finest playground in the whole world.'[87]

There were marked cultural differences between the mainly southern mountaineering establishment and the rapidly growing movement in the North. Jonathan Westaway maintains that the outdoor movement in Manchester started to develop a distinctive cultural identity during the nineteenth century, because of the presence of a large

[84] J. Longland, '1925-1930', *CCJ* VIII (3), 73 (1948), 262.
[85] Borthwick, *Always a Little Further*, 58.
[86] See Fussell, *Abroad*. *Country Life* reflected this trend, with increasing numbers of articles on winter sports in the Alps and summer holidays in the Mediterranean during the 1920s.
[87] W. M. Conway, 'Winter Sports in the Alps', *Pall Mall Magazine* (1910) (the last phrase a reference to Stephen).

German-Jewish community and a mainly nonconformist social elite.[88] Excluded from Oxford and Cambridge by their religion, and attracted to Germany because of the quality of its scientific education, Westaway argues that many upper-middle-class Mancunians rejected the English public-school obsession with team sports in favour of the more individualistic, Germanic tradition of gymnastics and outdoor pursuits. Walking and climbing reinforced a growing sense of northern regional identity, linking outdoor enthusiasts to the mountain and moorland landscapes surrounding their home towns and cities.

With his remarkable 'clubbability' and genuine love of the sport, Young invited many of the leading northern climbers to stay at Pen-y-Pass during the 1930s, but culturally he remained emphatically part of the neo-romantic tradition. In 1935, he tried to define the ethos of the upper-middle-class outdoor movement, of which the Pen-y-Pass meets were a continuing manifestation:

> Our 'tradition' – What is it?...the right social blend…the poise of…gaiety, of art, of literature, of travel and adventure…Sometimes, with good minds, the talk would go far into metaphysical realms. In the Smoking Room…often fifty would be singing and talking…Again there was no organising. People wrote and sang songs or poems or jokes as they pleased.[89]

Among the sophisticated younger generation of Cambridge climbers, there was less enthusiasm for some of these traditions, but still they went. Longland visited Pen-y-Pass almost every year, despite the fact that he did not particularly enjoy the singing or the games: 'It wasn't our idea of fun…I remember my fiancée confessing she was a bit bored with it.'[90] The post-War generation of northern rock climbers almost certainly found the social ambience at Pen-y-Pass even less congenial. Colin Kirkus (born 1910) 'biked to and from Liverpool for one night' at Pen-y-Pass in 1931, according to Young's scrapbook.[91] An insurance clerk, educated at Liverpool College, Kirkus was perhaps the best British climber in the early 1930s, but he was young, and probably nervous, and the Pen-y-Pass set considered him to be 'just a little boring, too quiet and

[88] J. Westaway, 'The German Community in Manchester, Middle Class Culture and the Development of Mountaineering in Britain', *English Historical Review* CXXIV, 508 (2009), 571-604.
[89] *PyP Scrapbook* (1935).
[90] J. Perrin, 'Table Talk at the Pen y Gwyrd', *Climber* 1987, 20; J. Longland, 'The Once-Upon-A-Time Pen y Pass', *Mountain* 1988, 31.
[91] *PyP Scrapbook* (1931).

rather lacking in conversation'.[92] Alan Hargreaves (born in Blackburn in 1904) was a guest in 1934. An apprentice engineer, who later trained as a chartered accountant, Longland described Hargreaves (not without affection) as 'a horrible little man', 'fiery, outspoken and truculent'.[93] Alf Bridge (born 1902), who stayed at Pen-y-Pass in 1939, was a steeplejack from Longsight in Manchester.[94] After studying at night school, Bridge became a highly respected engineer, but spent much of his life waging a protracted war against 'the Mandarins' in the mountaineering establishment. Like many of the post-War generation, he had learnt to climb on the small gritstone outcrops of Derbyshire, not in the Alps: 'Every precious moment was squeezed out of our week-ends – youth, vigour, ambition and the joy of living in our mountains meant so much to us.'[95]

All of the 'northern rock climbers' invited to Pen-y-Pass were members of a senior club. Many were educated at public school, and some entered the professions. But even within the relatively exclusive senior clubs, the social distinctions that determined who did, and who did not, feel part of the upper-middle-class neo-romantic tradition depended as much upon age, cultural attitudes and regional identities, as upon social class. While Kirkus, the taciturn Liverpool insurance clerk, did not 'belong', his cousin, Wilfrid Noyce (born 1917), educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, was a regular guest at Pen-y-Pass, widely admired for his poetry and his graceful climbing style. Noyce formed a schoolboy infatuation for Menlove Edwards (born 1910), founder of the Liverpool University Climbing Club, whom he met at Helyg, and was the only acknowledged love of Edwards' life. The two men frequently camped and climbed together, but they had fundamentally different attitudes to the mountains:

> The North, [Edwards] claimed, has at the back of its mind the idea that mountains are lumps of rock or grass or snow. It is what we do on them, not what they are, that matters. The Southerner, more steeped in the Victorian tradition, speaks of the 'Queenly Weisshorn', of Mont Blanc or Snowdon 'lording it' over surrounding peaks…The sight of a lonely snow peak by moonlight reminds us of medieval ladies; or a tower like the Muztagh

[92] Dean, *Hands of a Climber*, 78; A. B. Hargreaves, 'Colin Fletcher Kirkus' *CCJ* VII (2), 69 (1943).
[93] Jack Longland quoted in Perrin, 'Table Talk', 19; G. Milburn, 'A. B. Hargreaves: The Little Big Man', *High* 1997, 58.
[94] A. B. Hargreaves, 'Alfred William Bridge', *CCJ* XVI (3), 96 (1974).
[95] A. W. Bridge, 'Prelude', *CCJ* IX, 74 (1949), 84 and 88.

> epitomises brutal masculinity. It was no mere pose that made Menlove forbear ever to use such expressions. He simply did not feel that way.[96]

Despite their social interaction with the pre-War mountaineering establishment in the senior clubs and at Pen-y-Pass, many of the post-War generation of northern climbers, including Kirkus, Hargreaves, Bridge and Edwards, rejected the upper-middle-class neo-romantic tradition. Far from mythologizing the mountain landscape, they adopted an essentially instrumentalist approach. Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of participants in the mass outdoor movement, who had no social contact whatsoever with the pre-War tramping tradition, had even less opportunity or reason to assimilate its neo-romantic ethos.

The Alpine Club and the RGS renewed their attempts to climb Everest in the 1930s, sending expeditions in 1933, 1935, 1936 and 1938. All of them failed. The younger generation of northern climbers was completely excluded from these Oxbridge and army-dominated expeditions, largely because of the insular, metropolitan snobbery of the mountaineering establishment. Hugh Ruttledge (born 1884), leader of the 1933 and 1936 Everest expeditions was a Cambridge-educated Indian Civil Servant who had spent his entire working life on the sub-continent, had almost no mountaineering experience, and walked with a pronounced limp as a result of a pig-sticking accident. Nevertheless, he held strong views on the younger generation of northern climbers:

> I am coming more and more to the opinion that we must beware of the north British school of rock climbers if we are to succeed on Everest. Individually they are probably good men, but they are a very close corporation, with, it seems to me, a contempt for everyone outside their own clan.[97]

In keeping with the pre-War, upper-middle-class amateur tradition, the interwar 'Everesters' selected by the Alpine Club and the RGS were gentlemen adventurers. In later life, three became university professors; three became generals; one became a conservative MP; and one became the Governor of Gambia. Links with the intellectual and literary world remained strong. During his time at Cambridge, Mallory had been on the fringes of what was to become the Bloomsbury Group.[98] Raymond Greene, a member of the 1933 Everest expedition, was the elder brother of Graham Greene. When he needed a quiet place to study in 1929, Greene stayed at the Spreadeagle

[96] W. Noyce quoted in Perrin, *Menlove*, 176.
[97] C. Wells, *A Brief History of British Mountaineering* (Penrith, 2001), 268. J. Longland, 'Hugh Ruttledge', AJ 67 (1962).
[98] P. Gillman and L. Gillman, *The Wildest Dream*, 2001 edn, (2000), ch. 2 and 3.

Pub in Thame with Evelyn Waugh, then writing his travel book *Labels* (1930).[99] Michael Spender, brother of the poet Stephen Spender, was a member of the 1935 Everest expedition. In 1937, he and John Auden, brother of the poet W. H. Auden, went on a mountaineering expedition to the Karakoram.[100] A year earlier, W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood had co-written *The Ascent of F6*, a play about a Himalayan climbing expedition because, as Isherwood explained, several of their friends were mountaineers.[101]

By the mid-1930s, as the pre-War generation that still presided over the Alpine Club and the RGS reached their fifties and sixties, the unnatural generation gap created by the War was making itself felt even at the heart of the British mountaineering establishment. As Longland (a member of the 1933 Everest expedition) recalled: 'It is difficult to over-emphasise the frustration felt by young climbers in the mid-1930s, believing, as they did, that the conduct of the Alpine Club…was largely in the hands of people who had not been near a serious climb for years.'[102] More than half of the members of the Alpine Club in 1930 had been elected before the War, and many still clung to Edwardian or even Victorian notions of climbing standards and ethics. In *The Romance of Mountaineering* (1935), Graham Irving (born 1877), a prominent member of the Club, vigorously defended the British neo-romantic tradition and condemned the new 'mechanical' approach to climbing: 'In so far as any aesthetic or moral value is attached to the ascent, the use of mechanical devices cannot help us, and may hinder us.'[103] Meanwhile, under the editorial control of Colonel Edward Strutt (born 1874 and elected president of the Club in 1935), the *Alpine Journal* 'too often appeared in the role of a shocked and censorious aunt, appalled by the immoral goings-on of the younger generation'.[104]

In 1936 a group of younger members of the Alpine Club under the leadership of Douglas Busk (born 1906), a member of the diplomatic service educated at Eton and Oxford, attempted to bridge the generational gulf. Before meetings, the older members were accustomed to dine together at the Travellers' Club on Pall Mall. With covert support from Young, the post-War generation invited some older members to dine at the Red Lion pub in Mayfair, to discuss the modernisation of the Club. Colonel Strutt

[99] R. Greene, *Moments of Being* (1974), 88.
[100] *Blank on the Map* (1938), in E. Shipton, *The Six Mountaineering-Travel Books* (1985), 157.
[101] Introduction to W. H. Auden and C. Isherwood, *The Ascent of F6* (1936).
[102] Longland, 'Between the Wars', 88.
[103] R.L.J. Irving, *The Romance of Mountaineering* (1935), 121.
[104] Longland, 'Between the Wars', 88.

was 'flattered by the invitation to share a new outlook and surroundings, however essentially repugnant they remained to him', but he, like most of the older members, remained resolute in opposing any innovation.[105]

The cultural hegemony of the neo-romantic, upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering tradition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was sustained by a handful of leading climbers, such as Leslie Stephen and Geoffrey Winthrop Young, whose books were read, and whose opinions carried weight, in part because of their remarkable achievements as mountaineers. The disappearance of Mallory and Irvine briefly restored the prestige and mystique of the mountaineering establishment but, thereafter, the upper-middle-class neo-romantic strand of the outdoor movement did not produce any mountaineers or mountain writers of comparable stature. As the leadership of the movement became increasingly elderly, conservative and insular, the younger generation started to question both their values and their competence. As George Finch, an Australian-born, German-educated member of the 1922 Everest expedition observed after the failure of the 1936 expedition: 'We are beginning to make ourselves look very ridiculous.'[106]

[105] D. Busk, 'The Young Shavers', *Mountain* 54 (1977), 445.
[106] *Morning Post*, 17 Oct.1936.

The Preservation Movement

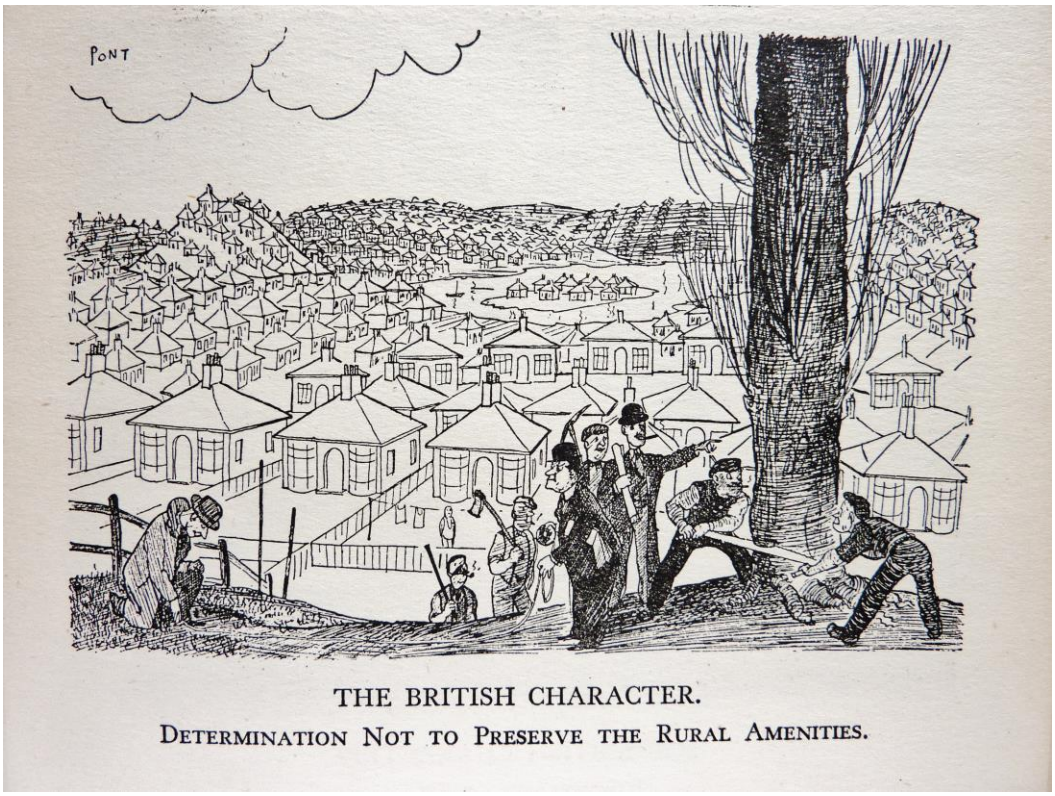

Illustration 7: 'Pont' Cartoon in *Punch*, 22 April 1936

The preservation movement formed an integral part of the pre-War upper-middle-class neo-romantic outdoor tradition, with significant overlapping membership between the various preservation societies and the senior mountaineering clubs. Leslie Stephen and James Bryce were prominent members of the Commons Preservation Society, Britain's first conservation body founded in 1865, which merged with the Footpaths Preservation Society in 1899.[107] Fellow members included Octavia Hill and Robert Hunter, who, together with Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, co-founded the National Trust in 1895.[108] As a Liberal MP, Bryce introduced the first four Access to Mountains Bills between 1884 and 1898, while George Meredith, a fellow member of the Sunday Tramps, helped to popularise a pantheistic approach to nature, and championed a number of causes which today would be regarded as environmentalism. Numerous participants in George Trevelyan and Geoffrey Winthrop Young's pre-War 'manhunts' in the Lake District, and Pen-y-Pass meets in Snowdonia, also played a prominent role

[107] W. H. Williams, *The Commons Open Spaces & Footpaths Preservation Society 1865-1965* (1965).

[108] M. Waterson, *The National Trust: The First Hundred Years* (1994); M. Waterson, *A Noble Thing: The National Trust and Its Benefactors* (2011). D. Cannadine, 'The First Hundred Years', in *The National Trust: The Next Hundred Years*, ed. H. Newby (1995); J. K. Walton, 'The National Trust Centenary: Official and Unofficial Histories', *Local Historian* 26, 2 (1996).

in the preservation and access movements. Trevelyan himself became a member of the Executive Committee of the National Trust; his elder brother, Sir Charles Trevelyan MP, introduced Access to Mountains Bills in 1908 and 1926; Hilton Young MP, Geoffrey's younger brother, introduced the first Town and Country Planning Act in 1932; Hugh Dalton, the 'Red Rambler', championed the 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Act as Labour Chancellor from 1945 to 1947; and Cyril Joad, a popular philosopher and broadcaster, became a prominent campaigner for access and National Parks. Longstanding ties of friendship and kinship therefore linked together many of the leading figures in the upper-middle-class tramping and preservation movements. There were also ties between the preservation movement and the leadership of the pre-War rambling movement in London. Lawrence Chubb (born 1873), for example, who co-founded the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1905, was the first salaried employee of the National Trust and served as secretary of the Commons Society for over half a century from 1896 to 1948.[109] As a result, before the War, there was broad alignment between the preservation movement and both the rambling and tramping strands of the outdoor movement.

The tramping and preservation movements shared a common cultural heritage, with both tracing their origins back to the Romantic poets. A chapter in Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* (1810), entitled 'Changes, and Rules of Taste for Preventing their Bad Effects', criticised unsightly housing and forestry developments taking place in the Lakes and expressed the hope that 'the author will be joined by persons of pure taste…who, by their visits…testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy'.[110] Wordsworth's appeal to protect the Lake District, later adopted as a manifesto by the preservation movement, was both radical – suggesting that public amenity should take precedence over private property – and potentially elitist, in that only those with 'pure taste' and 'an [educated?] eye to perceive' had the right to exercise authority over this 'national property'. The tension between these conflicting instincts – conservative and radical, elitist and egalitarian – persisted within the preservation movement into the interwar years and beyond.

Before the War, the preservation movement consisted of numerous small societies, whose membership was drawn from the urban professional and intellectual elite. The aims of the societies were diverse, including the preservation of footpaths, commons

[109] Williams, *The Commons Society*, 20.
[110] W. Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, 2004 ed., 93 (first pubd.1810).

and other open spaces; the protection of flora, fauna, ancient buildings and monuments; and a range of more targeted campaigns, such as the abatement of noise and litter, and the control of inappropriate advertising. As James Bryce observed:

> The existence of so many Societies with cognate aims was a great source of encouragement … Though they were largely made up of the same members…still it looked well...They could produce the impression that the attention of the whole country was directed to the question at issue.[111]

These aims were broadly mirrored within the senior mountaineering clubs, many of which included the study of natural sciences, archaeology and other field subjects within their objects, consciously linking their activities back to the natural history societies that flourished in the nineteenth century.[112] A few of the senior clubs also explicitly expressed their support for footpath preservation and access to open country. The Cairngorm Club, for example, was established in 1887 'to encourage mountain climbing in Scotland; to procure and impart scientific, topographical, historical, philological, literary and legendary information about the Scottish mountains', and 'to consider the right of access to Scottish mountains, and to adopt such measures in regard thereto as the Club may deem advisable'.[113]

Philip Lowe argues that preservation in the late nineteenth century was a radical cause, promoted by liberals and socialists, who sought to improve the urban as well as the rural environment.[114] Paul Readman broadly supports this interpretation, arguing that, while preservation societies had an elite membership, they were inspired by an altruistic desire to conserve both natural and cultural landscapes for the enjoyment of all.[115] John Sheail argues that the same spirit pervaded the movement during the interwar years, claiming that preservationists were motivated by 'the certain knowledge that they were improving the quality of life in inter-war Britain…Rural protection was part of a larger battle to create a more responsible human society.'[116]

Elizabeth Baigent argues that Octavia Hill, co-founder of the National Trust, was motivated by a 'missionary aestheticism' – a belief that poor city-dwellers' lives would

[111] J. Ranlett, 'Checking Nature's Desecration: Late Victorian Environmental Organization', *Victorian Studies* 26, 2 (1983),197.
[112] See page 114.
[113] *CaCJ*, Jan. 1918, 9, 50.
[114] P. Lowe, 'The Rural Idyll Defended: From Preservation to Conservation' in *The Rural Idyll*, ed. G. E. Mingay (1989), 116-19.
[115] P. Readman, 'Landscape Preservation, "Advertising Disfigurement" and English National Identity', *RH* 12, 1 (2001), 75-76.
[116] J. Sheail, *Rural Conservation in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 1981), 6.

be improved by access to open spaces, peace, quiet and beauty. However, Hill's radicalism, like that of many of the founders of the preservation movement, was essentially palliative – treating the symptoms of poverty rather than the underlying causes – and was certainly not egalitarian. She retained an unshakeable belief in the moral superiority of the middle and upper classes and found the rowdy leisure activities of the poor repugnant.[117] Burchardt argues that, as the nonconformist Liberal tradition of voluntarism declined in the interwar years, non-government organizations concerned with the preservation of the countryside 'remained an important strand of social life, but now in the main as a conservative rather than a radical force'.[118] Mandler goes further, arguing that the elite deliberately set up new 'preservationist ramparts' between the wars to prevent the urban invasion of 'their' England.[119] More controversially, Howkins and Lowerson regard 'élitist preservation, on the one hand, and *laissez-faire* housing development on the other', as equally responsible for the destruction of the countryside, arguing that working-class protests, such as the 1932 mass trespass on Kinder Scout, did more for the preservation of rural England than any action before or since.[120]

Before the War, the Commons Society and the National Trust were equally concerned with access to and preservation of the countryside. The Commons Society, in particular, had a tradition of using both litigation and direct action against landowners restricting access to common land or blocking public rights of way. When Lord Brownslow illegally erected two miles of iron railings around Berkhamsted Common in 1866, for example, George Shaw-Lefevre MP, co-founder and first chairman of the Society, paid 120 navvies to pull down the fence in the middle of the night.[121] This radical tradition gradually faded in the early twentieth century, however, and during the interwar years the Commons Society became increasingly conservative. With the dramatic expansion of country walking in the 1930s, the Society found itself having to deal with more than 2,000 complaints each year about closed footpaths or restricted access to common land. Inevitably, it found it expedient to establish good working relations with landowning interests, since it was quicker and far cheaper to obtain settlement through negotiation, rather than protracted litigation. Distanced from participants in the rapidly expanding hiking movement by both age and class,

[117] E. Baigent, talk on Octavia Hill, IHR, 23 Oct. 2014.
[118] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*,103-104.
[119] Mandler, 'Against Englishness',172.
[120] Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 52. This argument is considered in Chapter 5.
[121] G. J. S-L Eversley, *Commons Forests and Footpaths* (1910), 46.

Lawrence Chubb, the long-serving secretary of the Commons Society, also became increasingly sympathetic to the landowners' point of views, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The creation of the National Trust, by act of parliament in 1895, represented a pragmatic compromise that recognised the growing public interest in access to, and preservation of, rural amenities, while respecting the legal rights of private landowners.[122] As an asset-owning, rather than campaigning organization, the Trust was more reliant than the Commons Society upon the patronage of rich donors and sought, from the outset, an accommodation with landowning interests. Before the War, the National Trust's main focus was protecting areas of outstanding natural beauty, and it attached equal importance to preservation and to access.[123] During the interwar years, however, its focus shifted decisively towards preservation, as it embraced the middle-class cult that saw the English landscape and traditional rural life as embodying the nation's spiritual values, and embarked upon a campaign to rescue numerous historic country estates that would otherwise have been broken-up and sold-off to meet death duties.[124]

The growing conservatism within the interwar preservation movement was broadly mirrored within the upper-middle-class tramping movement. Even before the War, support for the access campaign was somewhat ambivalent, reflecting the conflict between the desire of members to share their enthusiasm with like-minded individuals, and their aesthetic preference for solitary and exclusive use of the landscape. When it was first established in 1892, the Yorkshire Ramblers explicitly supported the aims of the Commons Society, but three years after its formation it distanced itself from the access movement and elected Spencer Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire, and Edward Montagu-Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie, 1st Earl of Wharncliffe, as honorary members. Both Duke and Earl owned large estates in Yorkshire and Derbyshire, and their election was presumably motivated, in part, by the expectation that it would facilitate the negotiation of private access arrangements.[125] The Scottish Mountaineering Club, which counted several large landowners among its members, adopted a similar approach. In 1897, Professor Ramsay, the founding president, made clear that 'I and my friends had no desire to see the proposed Club mixed up with any

[122] P. Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 2009 ed., 47 (first pubd.1985).
[123] *Spectator*, 7 July 1894, 11.
[124] Cannadine, 'The First Hundred Years'; Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow*, ch.10.
[125] www.yrc.org.uk/yrcweb/index.php/theclub-menu/club-history (18 Feb. 2016); *YRCJ* (1899-1902), 1.

attempts to force rights-of-way. We did not desire the Club to become a stravaiging or marauding Club.'[126]

As the outdoor movement expanded and democratized, other senior clubs adopted a similar stance, preferring to negotiate private access agreements with landowners, rather than participate in the access campaign. The Rucksack Club (with its 'uncanny number of lawyers'), objected to trespassing on the grounds that 'it would be ungracious for the Club to countenance anything which (though legally unassailable) might have a tendency to impair friendly relationships' with local landowners.[127] A 1936 article in the *Northern Rambler* was probably correct when it speculated that many an individual member of the 'gentlemen's clubs' opposed the Access to Mountains Bill because 'the desired freedom would make common what he at present enjoys alone'.[128]

Like the upper-middle-class tramping movement, the interwar preservation movement remained small and elite. In 1920, the National Trust had just 713 members and an annual income of £500. By 1939, its membership had grown to 6,800, but it remained a genteel, amateur organization. The traditional ties between this small, elite group and the outdoor movement inevitably came under increasing strain as the social composition and age profile of the latter rapidly changed, and these mounting tensions were exacerbated by a profound southern bias within the preservation movement. While there were long-established regional footpath preservation societies in northern England and Scotland, all of the national preservation societies were headquartered in London. The Commons Society started as a local pressure group, campaigning to preserve open spaces near London, but gradually expanded its activities, mounting successful campaigns to safeguard the New Forest, the Forest of Dean and the Malvern Hills. It later positioned itself as a national body (notably active in protesting against the development of water reservoirs in the Lake District) but had a far weaker local presence and fewer personal ties to the outdoor movement in the North.[129] The National Trust had an even more pronounced regional bias. Of the 200 National Trust properties in England in 1932, all but 16 were located south of Derby or in the Lake District. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Lake District represented a sublime 'other' to the Home Counties, but the northern outdoor movement believed, with some justification, that many within the preservation movement regarded the rest of the North

[126] *SMCJ* (1897), 4, 88. See also H. Lorimer, 'Your Wee Bit of Hill and Glen: The Cultural Politics of the Scottish Highlands C1918-1945' (Loughborough, 1997), ch. 2.
[127] C. H. Pickstone, 'Trespassers will be Prosecuted', *RCJ* (1922), 4, 4, 248.
[128] 'Access to Mountains', *Northern Rambler*, Jul, 1936, 109.
[129] O'Neill, 'Most Magical Corner'.

of England as 'a counting-house on the top of a cinder-heap'.[130] As the Manchester Ramblers' Federation observed in 1930: 'So long as the conflict and the litter of industrialism were confined to the north…we heard nothing about preservation.'[131] It was only when the growth of motor transport, rapid suburbanisation, and the construction of the national grid started to threaten the peace and tranquillity of the Home Counties that the preservation movement sought to launch a truly national campaign. The vehicle it used to do so was the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE), established in 1926.[132]

The CPRE was conceived as an umbrella organization to harness and professionalise the numerous single-issue societies that had sprung up since the late nineteenth century, in order to pursue a more strategic and planned approach to preservation. Patrick Abercrombie's *The Preservation of Rural England* (1926) and Clough Williams-Ellis's *England and the Octopus* (1928) set out the Council's agenda. Abercrombie (born 1879), the first Hon. Secretary of the CPRE, was an architect and the first professor of Civic Design and Town Planning in Britain, at Liverpool University. Williams-Ellis (born 1883), also an architect, was an active supporter of the CPRE and founded the CPRW in 1928. The title of his book, taken from Leslie Stephen's 1902 essay 'In Praise of Walking', acknowledged the longstanding ties between the preservation movement and the tramping tradition:

> London, it is true, goes on stretching its vast octopus arms farther into the country…it spreads houses and churches over the fields of our childhood. And yet, between the great lines of railway there are still fields not yet desecrated by advertisements of liver pills.[133]

The CPRE was chaired by Sir Guy Dawber (born 1861), a prominent member of the arts and crafts movement; David Lindsay, Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, was president; King George V agreed to be patron; and the Executive Committee included Sir Lawrence Chubb (knighted in 1923 for services to the preservation movement) and Lady Mary Trevelyan, wife of Sir Charles.

The leadership of the CPRE cut across political boundaries: Williams-Ellis was a member of the ILP; Abercrombie a Liberal; Crawford a Tory. What united them was a

[130] See Walton and Wood, eds., *The English Lake District*. 'How I Became a Socialist', in W. Morris, *Useful Work v. Useless Toil*, 2008 ed., 134 (first pubd.1888).
[131] *M&DFRH* (1930), 9.
[132] The APRS was founded in the same year.
[133] 'L. Stephen, *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. 3, 277 (1902), 277.

belief in the need for rational planning – a conviction that unfettered *laissez faire* development would lead inexorably to the destruction of the countryside. The secretary of the CPRE, Gordon Griffin, articulated the Council's objectives in 1930: 'Development is not only inevitable but desirable in many rural areas. The C.P.R.E. does not discourage development as such, but it most urgently demands that development should be planned on orderly lines.'[134] The intellectual outlook of the CPRE was essentially modernist and technocratic. Its roots lay in architecture and town planning, and its leadership had fewer personal ties to the neo-romantic outdoor tradition than either the Commons Society or the National Trust. However, the instincts of many of its leaders (like that of the majority of the members) remained elitist and conservative.

Cyril Joad (born 1891), the popular philosopher, broadcaster and campaigner for access and for National Parks, was the embodiment of these contradictory sentiments. As he observed: 'Like many other Englishmen of my type I have Tory tastes and Radical opinions and my tastes are often at war with my opinions.'[135] Joad contrived to combine support for a broad range of radical causes – including the right to roam on privately-owned open country, the creation of national parks, pacifism, feminism, the decriminalisation of homosexuality, animal rights and the abolition of state censorship – with complete contempt for 'the ordinary man' – 'his stupidity in thought and timidity in action…his incapacity to be swayed by anything but the stomach and pocket view of life' – and an even greater contempt for the ordinary woman – 'there are many charming and intelligent women in the world, but they are very few compared with the number of those who are stupid and boring'.[136] Although unusually forthright about the contradictions in his liberal philosophy, Joad was typical of many activists in the interwar preservationist movement in his cerebral support for increased access to the countryside by the urban masses, and visceral horror at the possible consequences.[137]

The elitism of the CPRE was reflected in their conviction that the aristocracy and landed gentry had played an essentially benevolent role as 'guardians' of the countryside, whereas 'new money' was 'ruthless and untrammelled by any sense of obligation to preserve what was beautiful'.[138] In this regard, the CPRE probably reflected the majority-opinion of the upper-middle class, including most trampers. In a

[134] H. G. Griffin, 'The Aims and Objects of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England' in V. Cornish, *The Scenery of England* (1932), xvi, 130.
[135] C. E. M. Joad, *The Untutored Townsman's Invasion of the Countryside* (1946), 215.
[136] See 'Charter for Rationalists', C. E. M. Joad, *The Book of Joad: A Belligerent Autobiography* (1935), 21, 58, 96.
[137] The contradictions are clearly revealed in Joad, *Charter for Ramblers* and Joad, *Untutored Townsman*.
[138] Abercrombie quoted in Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 29.

leader, published in the same year that the CPRE was founded, *Country Life* bemoaned the destruction of the countryside and called upon 'the gentlemen of England' to re-engage in local politics, implying that local politicians, many of whom were now 'small businessmen', were not enforcing planning legislation out of self-interest.[139] Williams-Ellis echoed these sentiments, arguing that 'large owners…are accustomed to consider policy from a broad and public-spirited point of view'. In contrast, the lower classes 'are not used to and cannot afford to take long views…[and] can be tempted by a few shillings offered for an advertising site or a few pounds for a bungalow plot…One can scarcely expect these little people to defend the countryside.'[140]

Lowerson dismisses the CPRE as 'an effete minority anxious to clamp down on the hard-earned pleasures of "ordinary" people', and it is true that, in many cases, their preservationist zeal masked a barely concealed contempt for the aspirational lower-middle class, an attitude that Aldous Huxley satirised in *Antic Hay* (1923):[141]

> 'When I look at all these revolting houses', the old gentleman continued, shaking his fist at the snuggeries of the season-ticket holders, 'I am filled with indignation...What disgusts me is the people inside the architecture, the number of them, sir. And the way they breed. Like maggots, sir, like maggots. Millions of them, creeping about the face of the country, spreading blight and dirt wherever they go...I am old enough to remember walking through the delicious meadows beyond Swiss Cottage, I remember seeing cows milked in West Hampstead...What I object to is seeing good cornland being turned into streets, and meadows, where cows used to graze, covered with houses full of useless and disgusting human beings.[142]

With the declining influence of the aristocracy and landed gentry, the fundamental difficulty lay in deciding who should be entrusted with safeguarding rural amenity in the age of the masses. George Trevelyan advocated greater government intervention:

> In the matter of the preservation of the beauty of rural England, what we need is a State policy…The State is Socialist enough to destroy by taxation the classes that used to preserve rural amenity; but it is still too Conservative to

[139] 'The Peril of the Countryside', *Country Life*, 29 May 1926, 728.
[140] Williams-Ellis, ed., *Britain and the Beast*, 98.
[141] Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside', 266.
[142] A. Huxley, *Antic Hay*, 1977 ed.,189 (first pubd.1923).

> interfere in the purposes to which land is put by speculators to whom the land is sold.[143]

However, many within the CPRE instinctively mistrusted the democratic process. Despite being a supporter of the ILP, Williams-Ellis was unapologetically elitist in the Wordsworthian sense of presuming himself to be a person of 'pure taste' with 'an eye to perceive': 'We *do* know more than most because we care more, and have therefore thought, read, discussed, seen and understood more.'[144] Like the BBC, under the autocratic leadership of John Reith, both the National Trust and the CPRE believed that 'a class of cultivated intelligent people' was best able to decide what was best for everybody else.[145] Matless argues that the CPRE sought to create a 'moral landscape' in the interwar years. Bad landscapes were composed of elements – human or architectural – that were loud, impertinent, alien or sham. Good landscapes were dignified, composed, fit for purpose.[146] In the eyes of its leadership and supporters, convinced of their own superior judgement, the CPRE simply represented civilised good taste. *Country Life* encouraged its readers to join the CPRE in order to fight 'sporadic development, ramshackle huts, advertisements, vulgarity, litter, glaring new roads, spoilt villages…Progress and Prosperity undirected by Civilisation.'[147] The greatest challenge faced by the CPRE was to maintain unity within the disparate community of 'cultivated intelligent people' that it claimed to represent, many of whom had inherently contradictory objectives. And the rapidly expanding recreational use of the countryside by the urban masses posed one the greatest challenges to this unifying objective.

The 'constituent bodies' of the CPRE included all the major preservation societies; a broad range of central and local government bodies; and lobbying groups and professional associations interested in rural affairs, including the Country Landowners' Association, the Country Gentlemen's Association and the Land Agents' Society. There were also numerous 'affiliated bodies', including the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs (which Chubb had co-founded). Of the senior mountaineering clubs, however, only the FRCC sought affiliation, reflecting the growing insularity of the

[143] G.M. Trevelyan, 'Amenities and the State' in Williams-Ellis, ed., *Britain and the Beast*, 183.

[144] 1958 CPRE AGM address, quoted in D. Lowenthal and H. C. Prince, 'The English Landscape' *Geographical Review* LIV, 3 (1964), 327.

[145] John Bailey, chairman of the National Trust 1922-31, quoted in Cannadine, 'The First Hundred Years', 19. CPRE AR (1935).

[146] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 47; Matless, 'Moral Geographies'; D. N. Jeans, 'Planning and the Myth of the English Countryside in the Interwar Period', *RH* 1, 2 (1990), 249-64.

[147] 'Investing in Beauty', *Country Life*, 4 May 1929, 622.

upper-middle-class strand of the outdoor movement.[148] In order to promote local activism, the CPRE also encouraged the formation of a nationwide network of county branches. As a result, by 1935, the CPRE Executive Committee presided over a sprawling empire of 42 constituent bodies, 135 affiliated bodies and 26 county branches.[149]

From the outset, the CPRE was well-funded. Members were requested to pay a minimum subscription of £1 1s, which effectively restricted membership to the middle and upper classes. Contemporary literature suggests that many members of the upper-middle class felt obliged to support the CPRE, even if they held out little hope of it succeeding in its civilising mission. In Rosamond Lehmann's 1936 novel *The Weather in the Streets*, for example, Rollo Spencer, heir of Sir John Spencer, responds to the heroine's horror at the 'outburst of bungalows' in their Buckinghamshire village by declaring: 'Personally I subscribe to the Society for the Preservation of Rural England, I think it's called…I'm all for it…Don't begrudge a penny. And furthermore I'm all for the League of Nations. But if people want war they'll have war.'[150] The first annual report of the CPRE shows income of £966. By 1929 this had risen to £11,378, partly because of a substantial grant from the Carnegie Trust. For the remainder of the 1930s, the CPRE's annual income averaged around £3,500 and it had significant reserves. By comparison, the first year's income of the Ramblers' Association (the principal voluntary organization campaigning for access to open country) amounted to just £65, rising to £171 by 1939. Unlike the YHA and the National Trust, both of which also received substantial donations, the CPRE had no fixed assets and few fixed costs. Its entire budget was devoted to research and campaigning. It was therefore a formidable lobbying organization.

One of the main vehicles that the CPRE used to promote and publicise its campaigns was the annual Countryside Conference. Significantly, the first modest conference, aimed at bringing together various countryside interest groups, was organized by the Ramblers' Federations in 1927 with the intention of discussing both access to and preservation of the countryside. The conference was held at a Workers' Travel Association guest house in Hope in the Peak District, and included representatives from the London, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations, the Commons Society, the Peak District and Northern Counties Footpaths Preservation Society (PD&NCFPS), and a few London-based preservation societies. At the

[148] CPRE AR (1927).
[149] CPRE AR (1935).
[150] R. Lehmann, *The Weather in the Streets* (1936), 25.

conclusion of the meeting a resolution was passed 'that steps should be taken to organise for the next and following years a Conference on a wider basis, one which would include all societies concerned with the Preservation of the Country-side and the Freedom of Access thereto'.[151] The newly-formed CPRE agreed to act as convener for the subsequent conference which was initially called the Countryside and Footpaths Preservation Conference, reflecting the traditional alliance between the preservation and outdoor movements. However, as the perceived interests of the two movements progressively diverged, the CPRE dropped the reference to footpaths.

The second, substantially enlarged, 'Countryside Conference' took place at Leicester in October 1928. All the participants in the 1927 conference were represented, together with the CPRE and many of its constituent and affiliated bodies. Nevertheless, Stephen Morton, secretary of the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation, who had helped to organise the original conference at Hope, was profoundly disappointed with the outcome, describing it as a victory for 'the "Clean up England Societies"' who 'came in and took our organisation, used it, and at one and the same time used us to boost their ideas, and pooh-poohed ours'.[152]

The CPRE refused to debate Charles Trevelyan's 1926 Access to Mountains Bill because 'there would be a difference of opinion on it and they did not want that'.[153] While some delegates, particularly from the North, celebrated the Bill as 'the Ramblers' Charter', many others, such as the Country Landowners' Association, were implacably opposed to it. Representatives of the northern Ramblers' Federations felt that they had been betrayed by the CPRE, but perhaps worse, they felt humiliated. Morton acknowledged that they had failed to gain support for the Bill because 'we hadn't a speaker who could carry conviction, and because we were overawed by the array of big guns'.[154]

The third Countryside Conference, convened in Manchester in 1929 was, if anything, an even greater humiliation. The Manchester Federation was represented on the Organising Committee, and the Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield Federations met privately in advance to agree a common stance, but once again they were outgunned.[155] On the first day of the conference, Williams-Ellis and Abercrombie spoke on the threats facing the countryside; Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount Bledisloe and

[151] CPRE AR (1928).
[152] S. E. Morton, *OoD*, Dec.1928, 121.
[153] Countryside Conference 1928 minutes, MERL H/1/24, 30.
[154] Morton, 'The Conference – and After', 121.
[155] Correspondence Aug.1929, RAA 02/134.

Governor General of New Zealand, advocated the creation of a National Park in the Forest of Dean; and Sir Lawrence Chubb and Sir Alfred Hopkinson MP talked about commons, open spaces and footpath preservation. On the second day, the former Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, 1st Viscount Fallodon, discussed the preservation of flora and fauna and Lady Mary Trevelyan (one of the founders of the Women's Institute) spoke on education and the countryside. There were also talks about the National Trust, the preservation of antiquities, 'architectural considerations' and, in the evening, a public lecture on youth hostels.

While the upper-middle-class intellectual elite dominated proceedings inside the hall, hanging over the conference was the rapidly-expanding recreational use of the countryside by the urban masses, including thousands of youthful, ill-disciplined, largely unaffiliated, and entirely unrepresented hikers. *The Times* reflected the mood of the conference when it discussed the threat posed by 'them': 'They invade in their thousands…they have as yet no idea of the harm they unconsciously do…their eye is out of focus for quiet beauty, and yet, in their way, they enjoy the country.'[156]

On the Saturday after the official conference ended, Edwin Royce, secretary of the Manchester Ramblers' Federation, had organized two optional motor tours for delegates: one to Dovedale, large parts of which had recently been donated to the National Trust, and the other to the Longshaw Estate, on the gritstone moors above Sheffield. When the Duke of Rutland put the latter on the market in 1927 it was described as being 'suitable for a golf course' with several 'beautifully placed building sites'.[157] After a vigorous campaign, led by the Sheffield City Council and the Sheffield Association for the Protection of Local Scenery (founded by Bert Ward, of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, and later to become the Sheffield & Peak District Branch of the CPRE), it was acquired by public subscription and donated to the National Trust. Local rambling clubs provided voluntary wardens, who patrolled the estate on Sundays and Bank Holidays in order to minimise litter and damage to wildlife.[158] At the time of the conference, it was the largest northern National Trust property outside the Lake District and the only extensive area of moorland in the Peak District where walkers from the surrounding industrial towns had the right to roam. Longshaw therefore represented a remarkable local collaboration between the outdoor and preservation movements that

[156] *The Times*, 14 Oct.1929.
[157] CPRE Sheffield & Peak District Branch, *Account of Fifty-Five Years' Work 1924-1978* (1979), 4.
[158] See 'The Longshaw Wardens', *Onwards Rambling Club Handbook* 1929-30, 90, (SLSL) and *SCRH* 1929-30, 77, 84. The Wardens' Committee included Bert Ward, Stephen Morton and Phil Barnes.

had, in effect, created a 'green belt' along the western flank of one the most polluted industrial cities in Britain.[159] The alternative to the two Peak District trips organized by the Manchester Federation was a visit to Ambleside in the Lake District, not far from Wordsworth's former home at Dove Cottage. In the event, over 100 delegates chose to go to Ambleside, while both of the Peak District visits were cancelled due to lack of interest.

The purpose of the Ambleside conference extension was to promote the campaign to turn the Lake District into Britain's first National Park, as Wordsworth had intended. Abercrombie, Williams-Ellis, Charles Trevelyan, Hugh Walpole, Henry Massingham (the rural revivalist) and Vaughan Cornish (a prominent geographer) all spoke.[160] Reflecting the longstanding ties between the upper-middle-class preservation movement and the mountaineering tradition, on the Sunday following the conference, Arthur Wakefield, former president of the FRCC and member of the 1922 Everest expedition, led delegates on a fell-walking excursion.

Since its inception, the CPRE had seen National Parks as a unifying cause for its disparate membership and had already sent a confidential memorandum on the subject to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, proposing the establishment of a committee to investigate the matter. MacDonald liked to portray himself as heir to the Scottish 'stravaiging' tradition:

> To know the footpaths by instinct as a child of the wilds does, to trespass wherever the hills or the moors invite and whether or not the barbed wire and the notice boards forbid…what lusty and gallant happiness greater than that has life to give?[161]

He also appeared to support a change of law on access:

> In Scotland the feeling still remains common among the people that private property in land is on a totally different footing to private property in anything else...that access to mountains is a common right.[162]

Nevertheless, the memorandum from the CPRE stressed that the primary purpose of National Parks should be preservation, not access, and offered the assistance of the

[159] *The Times*, 6 Nov.1927.
[160] See H. J. Massingham, *Remembrance: An Autobiography* (1941).
[161] MacDonald, *Wanderings and Excursions*, 11.
[162] R. Macdonald, *Socialism: Critical and Constructive* (1921), 192-93, quoted in Morgan, *Ramsay Macdonald*, 90.

CPRE in making 'certain enquiries and preliminary studies'.[163] In response, MacDonald set up the Addison Committee on National Parks and, as intended, the 1929 Countryside Conference unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the CPRE to co-ordinate the campaign for National Parks on behalf of its constituent members, including the submission of evidence to the Committee.

From the outset, the leaders of the preservation movement saw the formation of National Parks as a socially *exclusive* project. Some 'preliminary notes' prepared by the CPRE ahead of the Ambleside Conference noted that 'the basic principle of National Parks should be the preservation of wild nature, the provision of facilities for ramblers and naturalists, & not to facilitate mass invasion'.[164] The terms of reference of the Addison Committee talked of 'the improvement of recreational facilities for the people', but in his book *National Parks and the Heritage of Scenery* (1930), Cornish asserted that, in this context, 'recreation' meant 'the occupations of the nature lover, the rambler and climber, geologist, botanist and naturalist, the landscape artist and the many who feel, though they may not be able to express, the poetry of nature'. In order to prevent overcrowding, he emphasised that the government should ban any increase in charabanc traffic.[165]

The appointment of the Addison Committee triggered a wave of commentary and press speculation about the purpose of National Parks. Were they intended to preserve the natural landscape, flora and fauna? Or were they primarily to provide healthy recreation for town dwellers? Would agriculture and forestry be permitted? What tourist development, if any, was appropriate within the Parks? And if private landowners were to be deprived of the right to maximise the agricultural, sporting or developmental potential of their land, how would they be compensated? There was also a vigorous debate about which parts of the country deserved to be 'preserved from spoliation', with regional newspapers across the country pressing the case for local 'beauty spots'.

There was disagreement about who should administer the Parks. Lord Bledisloe's proposal to turn the Forest of Dean into a National Park was motivated, in part, by the fact that much of the land was already owned by the Crown Estates, and therefore

[163] Memorandum dated 2 Aug.1929.
[164] MERL C/1/102/1.
[165] V. Cornish, *National Parks and the Heritage of Scenery* (1930), 4, 25. According to Matless, 'Cornish, like many other preservationists regarded Nature as suffused with a Divine Immanence…a literal object of worship.' See D. Matless, 'The English Outlook: A Mapping of Leisure, 1918-1939', in N. Alfrey and S. Daniels, eds., *Mapping the Landscape* (Nottingham, 1990), 31; 'Nature, the Modern and the Mystic: Tales from Early Twentieth Century Geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, 3 (1991), 272-86.

converting it into a National Park was, in theory, relatively straightforward. For the CPRE, however, this represented an impediment rather than a benefit:

> Under the extension of such a programme it is safe to say that National Parks…would come to be controlled centrally by H. M. Office of Works in London…[S]uch a development would be disastrous…Our countryside has been transformed by human action; its appearance is bound up with ancient social, economic, and cultural traditions. We do not want to have areas railed off and entered only by permit from Bureaucracy. We would rather preserve and conserve the best of Rural Life, administered by people who know the local traditions, and who love their own countryside. Treated bureaucratically, they will become simply a playground of the big towns.[166]

The CPRE wanted to preserve not only the rural landscape, but also the social and cultural traditions that had given rise to it. In their eyes, the public accountability of democratic government posed an unacceptable threat to the authority of upper-middle-class 'leaders of thought' over 'their own countryside'.[167]

Confronted with the challenge of preparing a blueprint for National Parks that reconciled these conflicting interests, Christopher Addison, a medical doctor by training, who became a Liberal and later a Labour MP and was appointed Minister of Agriculture in 1930, approached the CPRE for advice on drafting the report. Lord Crawford convened an informal meeting where it was agreed that the CPRE should act as a '"Who's Who", identifying appropriate representatives of the various interest groups concerned'.[168] After the meeting, Crawford wrote to Griffin, the secretary of the CPRE, instructing him that his job was to ensure that the evidence 'did not sprawl all over the field'.[169] When the evidence had been gathered and sifted, Crawford hosted an informal dinner for Addison, at which the allotted experts in each field – Abercrombie on planning, local government and compensation; Cornish on landscape; Chubb on commons and footpaths; S. H. Hamer on the role of the National Trust; and Sir Peter Chalmer-Mitchell from the Zoological Society on flora and fauna – summarised the evidence and gave their recommendations before the formal submissions. Throughout this process, the CPRE portrayed itself as technocratic and

[166] Paper prepared by F. C. Mears following the Countryside Conference Oct.1929. MERL C/1/102/1.
[167] Cornish, *National Parks and the Heritage of Scenery*, 9.
[168] Minutes of meeting on 24 Oct. 1929, C/1/102/1.
[169] Letter 20 Nov. 1929.

impartial, giving evidence based on objective research and analysis, rather than succumbing to local interests.

The one area where the CPRE declined to make any recommendations, since it regarded the issue as 'complex and so varied in nature as to stimulate much controversy', was in relation to the recreational use of National Parks.[170] They listed the interested parties that the Addison Committee might consult as being the Ramblers' Federations, the Camping Club, the Country Landowners' Association, the Land Agents' Association and the Association of Local Authorities. By ignoring the interests of ramblers, hikers and campers, the CPRE deliberately distanced itself from the rapidly expanding mass outdoor movement. As Lord Crawford observed: 'We must remember the distinction between the Preservation of Rural England and its Utilisation. I do not think the CPRE is concerned in camping or access to mountains.'[171] The National Trust swiftly followed the CPRE's lead, emphasising that preservation should take precedence over access in its submission to the Addison Committee. Hamer noted that 'the wider problem of access to commons, moors and mountains is one rather for the Commons…Society'.[172]

The stance adopted by the CPRE and the National Trust was broadly representative of upper-middle-class trampers, many of whom regretted the burgeoning popularity of 'their' sport and the fact that they no longer enjoyed the exclusive use of the landscape. Even within the relatively inclusive FRCC, some members opposed the creation of a National Park in the Lake District, because 'the purpose of a label is advertisement' and the designation would encourage more visitors and a 'glut of their unwholesome litter and garbage'.[173] The decision by the preservation movement to align itself with landowning interests, rather than urban walkers, inevitably created a rift with the formal rambling movement, particularly in Manchester and Sheffield, where access to open country had become a defining policy objective. Far from emulating and assimilating upper-middle-class attitudes to the countryside, as Helen Walker suggests, the Manchester Federation noted that 'there is a growing suspicion among northern ramblers that the Countryside Conference is not a wholly disinterested body,

[170] Letter from Crawford to Addison, 30 Oct.1929.
[171] Letter to Griffin, 17 Oct.1929.
[172] S. H. Hamer, secretary of the NT, in *OoD*, Aug.1931, 9, 49, 19. Hamer was reflecting the views of John Bailey, chairman from 1922-31. See Cannadine, *In Churchill's Shadow*, 233. J. Sheail, 'The Concept of National Parks in Great Britain 1900-1950', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 66 (1975), 43.
[173] 'National Parks: A Note', *FRCCJ* (1931), 9, 1, 96-98.

but is being captured by a class concerned only with the preservation of rich man's amenities'.[174]

The Addison Committee published its findings in 1931. It recommended the formation of a National Authority to select and manage 'National Reserves' and identified areas worthy of consideration, but stopped short of making specific recommendations. The report stated that 'improving the opportunities of access [for nature lovers, walkers, climbers and camping parties]…does not present the same urgency, over a large part of the country, as the question of preserving the country from disfigurement'. However, it conceded that while landowners had been 'generally liberal' in allowing access to their land, opportunities for access were not evenly distributed.[175] The report was welcomed by the CPRE and the organizations it represented, including the Commons Society, which noted that it was 'very gratifying to find that the suggestions made by the Society…have practically all been adopted'.[176] However, during the time that had elapsed between the appointment of the Committee and the publication of its findings, Wall Street had crashed, the western world had entered the Great Depression and Ramsey MacDonald's Labour administration had been replaced by a National Government with a Tory majority. Faced with an economic downturn of unprecedented severity, the new government quietly shelved the Report.

Throughout this time, the 'hiking craze' was gaining in popularity, and support for access to open country continued to build among northern activists, with demonstrations in the Winnats Pass in Derbyshire and on Ilkley Moor in Yorkshire during the summer of 1931. Meanwhile in parliament, trampers, ramblers, preservationists and their friends and allies, continued to make steady, if unspectacular, progress with legislation promoting both access to and preservation of countryside. Charles Trevelyan attempted to introduce Access to Mountains Bills in 1926, 1927 and 1928. Hilton Young, younger brother of Geoffrey Winthrop Young, introduced a Rural Amenities Bill in 1929, which sought to make preservation a consideration in rural planning. The Bill had been partly drafted by the CPRE and a parliamentary Amenities Group was established, under the chairmanship of Sir Martin Conway, to promote it. In 1907, Conway founded and became president of the League for the Preservation of the Beauty of Switzerland, which opposed 'the vulgarisation of the Alps' and 'luxurious excitements of...bands, balls, parades and casinos'.[177] His

[174] *M&DRFH* (1930), 9.
[175] C. Addison, *Report of the National Park Committee* (1931), 10.
[176] *Journal of the Commons Society*, July 1931, 82-86.
[177] See S. Thompson, *A Long Walk with Lord Conway* (Oxford, 2013), 194.

appointment as chairman of the parliamentary Amenities Group therefore reflected the longstanding ties and exclusive agenda of the upper-middle-class mountaineering and preservation movements. Philip Noel-Baker, Labour member for Derby, became secretary of the Amenities Group, thereby ensuring that it enjoyed cross-party support. During the War, Noel-Baker had served in the Friends Ambulance Unit in France and the British Ambulance Unit in Italy with Geoffrey Winthrop Young and George Trevelyan. Hilton Young withdrew his Bill in 1930 when the Government announced that it intended to come forward with its own Town and Country Planning Bill (which it did in 1931). As newly appointed Minister for Health, Young introduced the new Bill. Although it was substantially amended and weakened at the committee stage, it nevertheless represented the first time that planning legislation had been extended to rural areas.

Illustration 8: Sir Hilton Young MP addressing the Kent Rally, 26 May 1935 (*Daily Herald*).

Further attempts were made by Graham White, Liberal MP for Birkenhead East, and by Ellen Wilkinson, Labour MP for Middlesbrough, to introduce Access to Mountains Bills, in 1930 and 1931 respectively. Wilkinson had been a keen rambler during her

time as a student at Manchester University in the 1920s.[178] Also in 1931, Ernest Simon, Liberal MP for Wythenshawe and former Lord Mayor of Manchester, introduced a Rights of Way Bill, which sought to strengthen the law to prevent the illegal closure of footpaths. The Bill was partly drafted by the Commons Society, Noel-Baker spoke in support, and it received cross-party support.[179] A few years later, Hilton Young introduced the Restrictions to Ribbon Development Act (1935).

Despite these developments, the rapid expansion of the outdoor movement and a growing militancy in the North continued to outpace developments in parliament. In 1932, a 'mass trespass' took place on Kinder Scout in the Peak District.[180] Partly in response, the CPRE launched a 'Code of Courtesy for the Countryside'. The Code was intended to educate unruly townspeople on appropriate standards of behaviour to be adopted in the country. In an article in the *Weekly Review*, the CPRE explained that

> a rising temper among rambling movements in the Pennine mass-trespass area, the closing by exasperated landowners of public access to various estates, and the leaping statistics of the Youth Hostels Association show how little time there is to lose if the use of the countryside is not to grow into an unmanageable problem.[181]

The following year, the CPRE proposed the use of voluntary wardens (based on the model adopted at the Longshaw Estate) to police compliance with its Country Code and launched a national campaign 'to overcome the thoughtlessness of the public'.[182] The countryside warden scheme was broadly endorsed by the leadership of the London and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations, who recognised that the reputation of 'respectable' ramblers was being sullied by the activities of young hikers who were not members of formal clubs. In 1934, the Sheffield branch of the CPRE claimed that as a result of the good work of the 'Derbyshire CPRE Wardens', the Hayfield district (where the 'mass trespassers' had gathered before they set out for Kinder Scout) 'had been "cleaned up" of the rowdy element and the Hayfield Parish Council had written expressing their thanks'. They proposed to focus next on Hathersage 'which had obtained a reputation almost as bad as Hayfield'.[183]

[178] C. S. Davies, *North Country Bred: A Working-Class Family Chronicle* (1963), 150.
[179] Hansard, 30 January 1931.
[180] See page 187.
[181] *Weekly Review*, 1 Oct.1932, 4.
[182] *CPRE MR,* Mar. 1933, 1, 5, 33.
[183] *CPRE MR* July 1934, 4, 1, 33.

Characteristically, the Manchester Federation refused to join the national scheme, but nevertheless implemented their own programme of 'warden-guides'.[184] Ben Anderson claims that the wardens represented a 'regulatory system acceptable to the vast majority of countryside users', but provides little evidence to suggest that young, unaffiliated, hikers supported the scheme.[185] Outside Sheffield (where a unique local relationship existed between the rambling and the preservation movement, founded upon the successful joint campaign to acquire and manage the Longshaw Estate) and possibly Manchester (if Anderson is correct), the countryside warden scheme met with either apathy or outright opposition, even from the leaders of Ramblers' Federations. The Cumberland and Lake District Ramblers' Federation, for example, noted that 'a certain organisation, acting on a suggestion by a London society, attempted to organise a small army of semi-uniformed unofficial rambler police, called Countryside Wardens…The scheme is viewed with dissatisfaction by the majority of Lakeland ramblers.'[186] The CPRE maintained that the scheme commanded widespread support but conceded that it had not achieved its aims.[187] The outdoor press was more sceptical: 'It is a well-known fact that the scheme for setting up a large number of countryside wardens to patrol and protect beauty spots…has not brought the response anticipated.'[188]

In parliament, supporters of the CPRE continued to harry the government, regularly asking questions about progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the Addison Committee. Hilton Young, as the responsible Minister, found himself in the unenviable position of defending the Government's policy, which was to do nothing.[189] Frustrated by the lack of progress and conscious of the growing divergence of interests between the preservation movement and the emerging mass outdoor movement, in 1935 a 'Joint Committee of Open-Air Organisations', comprising many of the leading associations linked to the outdoor movement, including the Ramblers' Federations, the Camping Club, the Co-operative Holidays Association, the Holiday Fellowship and the YHA, decided to side-track the preservation movement and to launch their own campaign to press the government to implement the recommendations of the Addison Committee.[190] Emboldened by its rapidly rising membership, the initiative was

[184] See 'Countryside Wardens', *M&DRFH* (1932), 60.
[185] Anderson, 'A Liberal Countryside?'
[186] *Lakeland Rambler* (1936), 28.
[187] *CPRE MR* July 1935, 5, 5, 43.
[188] *T&C*, Oct.1936, 2.
[189] Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', 80-83.
[190] Conference of Open-Air Organisations minutes 30 Nov.1935 (RAA 02/500).

spearheaded by the YHA (where George Trevelyan was president), which hired the Central Hall, Westminster to launch the campaign.

Griffin, the secretary of the CPRE, only found out about the breakaway conference when he was invited to attend it by George Mitchell, Hon. Secretary of the London Federation.[191] By that time, Abercrombie (who was also a vice president of the YHA) had agreed to speak and a resolution had been drafted and circulated calling upon the prime minister to receive a deputation. Lord Crawford suspected a conspiracy between Mary Trevelyan (and presumably her husband and brother-in-law) and Abercrombie, while Griffin was furious, noting that Abercrombie 'has been very much misled lately by what I am pleased to call the "ginger group"…They…run a very grave risk of splitting the whole of the preservation movement.'[192] In a letter to a civil servant at the Ministry of Health (which had responsibility for Town and Country Planning), Griffin vowed 'to fight tooth and nail against the setting up of any new organisation outside the aegis of the C.P.R.E. which was formed to provide the machinery for collective action…and has been entrusted with the National Park matter by successive National Conferences.'[193] Having mustered the support of the National Trust and the Commons Society, Griffin wrote to Abercrombie informing him that the campaign by the Open-Air Organisations 'will not be supported financially or otherwise by our leading constituents', and demanding that the resolution be withdrawn and a new one submitted calling upon the CPRE to set up a special National Parks Committee. His letter emphasised that the interests of the outdoor movement must be subordinated to the need to maintain unity within the upper-middle-class preservation movement, claiming, rather disingenuously, that 'the Ramblers, the Youth Hostels Association and the Campers want to tackle the problem from their own point of angle so as to ensure that their own particular requirements receive primary consideration…Our policy envisages consideration to every point of view.'[194]

Threatened with the withdrawal of support from the CPRE, the National Trust and the Commons Society, the Open-Air Organisations duly endorsed the formation of a Standing Committee on National Parks as an *ad hoc* committee of the CPRE, and elected various representatives to serve on it. As Griffin had intended, the new Committee was too large to function as a working body and therefore a smaller 'preparatory sub-committee' was established, with John Dower (born 1900), an

[191] Letter 4 Nov.1935.
[192] Letter to Griffin, 30 Dec. 1935. Letter to Miss E. Bright Ashford, 31 Dec.1935.
[193] Letter to G. L. Pepler, 10 Jan. 1936.
[194] Letter to Abercrombie, 19 Dec.1935.

architect and son-in-law of Charles Trevelyan, appointed as drafting secretary.[195] But the 'disappearing resolution' inevitably provoked debate within the outdoor press about the growing division between upper-middle-class preservationists, who sought to safeguard the beauty, tranquillity and orderly appearance of the English countryside, and lower-middle and upper-working-class ramblers, hikers and campers, who regarded it as an amenity to be accessed and enjoyed by the urban population.[196]

In light of 'the overclouding of the political situation, which has caused the attention of all Members of Parliament to be fixed on European affairs', the Standing Committee on National Parks decided to defer any submission to the government for nearly two years.[197] However, in 1938, *The Case for National Parks,* written by John Dower, with an introduction by George Trevelyan*,* was finally published by the CPRE.[198] As discussed in Chapter 7, it paved the way for the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act (1949).

* * *

Helen Walker claims that there was continuity between the pre-War intellectual, neo-romantic, outdoor tradition and the interwar mass outdoor movement, arguing that an anti-industrial, Arcadian conception of the countryside gradually 'tricked-down' from the upper-middle-class, becoming pervasive by the outbreak of the War.[199] This chapter has shown that, even *within* the upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering movement, the unnatural generation gap created by the War resulted in a major discontinuity, and in the post-War years this strand of the outdoor movement became increasingly elderly, conservative and insular.

A few, mainly Oxbridge-educated, young mountaineers still regarded themselves as part of a continuing neo-romantic tradition. When he was interviewed in 1988, Sir Jack Longland (born 1905), for example, recalled that 'when I started, the person you read was Leslie Stephen…We felt part of a tradition…Climbing was very much a literary business.'[200] But the upper-middle-class outdoor movement did little to encourage the assimilation of thousands of young hikers into the neo-romantic tradition. Either by deliberate policy, or simply because of their ambience, the 'gentlemen's clubs'

[195] See Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', ch.5.
[196] See page 227.
[197] *CPRE MR* Apr.1938, 11, 1, 45.
[198] Standing Committee on National Parks, *The Case for National Parks in Great Britain* (CPRE&W, 1938).
[199] Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement'.
[200] J. Perrin, 'The Essential Jack Longland', *Mountain*, 123 (1988), 27-28.

remained socially exclusive, and therefore small. Membership of the London-based Alpine Club actually shrank during the interwar years, as old members died and fewer young men chose to join, but even the relatively inclusive FRCC struggled to adapt to the rapid social changes taking place. Writing in the *FRCC Journal* in 1936, Harry Kelly (born 1886) observed that the large increase in the number of walkers and climbers

> brings various knotty problems in its train. Firstly, there is the social problem. In former days we had among climbers a preponderance of the more fortunate people endowed with a certain limited degree of means and leisure… Nowadays all that is largely changed.[201]

In Scotland too, a new generation of walkers and climbers emerged with no social connections to the pre-War traditions. In 1939, Sandy Wedderburn, a partner in an Edinburgh law firm, wrote an article in the *SMC Journal* in which he imagined a typical young party 'starting out late, after making breakfast, from their tent or Youth Hostel…They probably wear ragged Grenfell breeches and a miscellaneous and historic array of sweaters.' He speculated that their conversation might include 'Jimmy's exploits of last week-end or perhaps dialectical materialism'. In contrast, members of the SMC stayed at comfortable hotels and were characteristically 'clad in caps [and] tweed knickerbocker suits' (see Illustration 4, page 61). As Wedderburn observed, the social segregation of the two groups was so complete that the young Scottish hikers and climbers were 'not so much heirs to a tradition as the discoverers of a secret hitherto kept from their class'.[202]

Before the War, the preservation movement formed an integral part of the upper-middle-class neo-romantic tradition. It too remained small and social-exclusive during the interwar years, and while the intellectual outlook of the leaders of the CPRE was modernist and technocratic, the instincts of the movement were elitist and conservative. Preservationists shared many common objectives with the pre-War leaders of the formal rambling movement, particularly in the South, and at a local level pursued a number of successful collaborations in the North. However, as the social composition and age profile of the outdoor movement changed during the interwar years, anxiety about the threat posed by the dramatic expansion in the recreational use of the countryside by the urban masses led the preservationists to pursue an increasingly elitist and exclusive agenda. In particular, they abandoned their historic

[201] Kelly and others, '100 Years of Rock-Climbing in the Lake District', 200.
[202] Wedderburn, 'Short History of Scottish Climbing', 98, 107.

support for access to open country, thereby alienating the leadership of the formal rambling movement in the North of England.

Middle-aged, middle-class trampers and preservationists adopted a possessive, almost proprietorial, attitude to the countryside during the interwar years, regarding the pastoral landscapes of southern England as the embodiment of the nation's spiritual values, while the mountains of the Lake District and Snowdonia were sublime outposts, where the metropolitan elite could engage in strenuous exercise and aesthetic contemplation. Many resented the fact that they no longer enjoyed the exclusive use of the landscape and, either actively or passively, sought to exclude or control people whose attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside differed from their own. As Matless points out, National Parks, in particular, were conceived by the CPRE and their supporters as a deliberate form of 'cultural zoning', intended to preserve the most beautiful parts of Britain for the use of people, like themselves, with 'pure taste' and 'an eye to perceive'.[203]

The evidence for neo-romantic attitudes within the hiking movement and the YHA will be evaluated in Chapters 5 and 6, but there is little *prima facie* evidence from within the tramping and preservation movements to suggest continuity between the pre-War upper-middle-class outdoor tradition and the interwar hiking craze. As Eric Byne and Geoff Sutton observed, in the first working-class history of walking and climbing in the Peak District (published in 1966):

> There existed for fifty years (from 1890 to 1940) in Britain two separate mountain traditions: that of the university men, which produced all the literature…according to which the British hills were a place of quiet interludes between, or of training for, the serious business of the Alps…and that of the northern working men who lacked the money to explore far afield, to whom the British hills were an end in themselves…It took the Second World War with its economic and social upheavals to bring together the two traditions…to their mutual benefit.[204]

[203] See Matless, 'Moral Geographies'.
[204] E. Byne and G. Sutton, *High Peak* (1966), 30.

Chapter 4

Ramblers and Access Campaigners

Illustration 9: Professor R. J. Brocklehurst addressing the Ramblers' Association West of England Rally, Westbury, 20 June 1937 (Daily Herald).

Harvey Taylor rejects neo-romantic explanations for the mass outdoor movement, and seeks to redefine the phenomenon 'in practical campaigning and politically significant terms'.[1] He maintains that there was continuity between the 'substantive outdoor movement' in the interwar years and an early-industrial country walking tradition among working people, and argues that the movement was rooted in 'open-air fellowship and the rights of free-born Englishmen or the Scottish stravaiging tradition of roaming at will, rather than atavistic romanticism'.[2] This chapter summarises the pre-War origins of the upper-working- and lower-middle-class rambling movement; examines its development during the interwar years; and tests the hypothesis that the campaign for access to open country, championed by this strand of the outdoor

[1] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*,1.
[2] Ibid., 4.

movement during the interwar years, can account for the 'hiking craze' and the mass movement that arose from it.

The rambling tradition is less well documented than tramping and mountaineering. Moreover, past studies have apparently failed to recognise that most records that do exist were written by its middle-aged and mainly middle-class leaders or equally exceptional working-class autodidacts, many of whom were steeped in the pre-War traditions, while the motivations and experiences of the vast majority of younger members have not been investigated. As a result, previous studies have over-emphasised the 'rational' and campaigning aspects of the movement, while understating its social function.

The Pre-War Rambling Movement

As noted in Chapter 1, the existence of an informal, country-walking tradition is suggested by the formation of footpath preservation societies in Glasgow (1822), York (1824), Manchester (1826), Edinburgh (1845) and the Commons Society in London in 1865. There are also occasional references to country walking in mid-nineteenth-century imaginative literature, as well as newspaper articles and guidebooks, such as Hugh Macdonald's *Rambles Round Glasgow* (1860), apparently aimed at the independent walker.[3] However, prior to the appearance of formal, collaborative rambling clubs and holiday associations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it is impossible to assess from these scattered references whether country walking was a common or an exceptional activity, or to determine the demographics of participants.[4]

Taylor's argument that there was continuity between an early-industrial, working-class country-walking tradition and the interwar mass outdoor movement appears to reflect the fact that much of his research was conducted in small mill towns in Lancashire and Yorkshire where it remained possible to walk into open country and back within a few hours. During the interwar years, autobiographies and novels by coal miners living in South Wales, Nottinghamshire, West Cumberland and Scotland show that a similar informal, working-class tradition of country walking existed across England, Scotland and Wales in relatively small mining communities, and it is possible that this too represented the continuation of an early or even pre-industrial tradition.[5] However, the

[3] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch.1 & 2; Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 25.
[4] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost,* ch.10.
[5] E.g. J. C. Welsh, *The Underworld* (1920), 33; R. Davies, *The Withered Root* (1927), 204-5; L. Jones, *Cwmardy* (1937), 183; G. A. W. Tomlinson, *Coal-Miner* (1937), 91, 121; and B.L. Coombes, *These Poor Hands* (1939), 22. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour* (1984), 179-80 notes the continuation of pre-industrial traditions in the leisure activities of Lancashire mill

formal, collaborative rambling movement (which is the main focus of Taylor's study and of this chapter) was particularly characteristic of major cities and conurbations, where inner-city workers were deprived of easy access to the countryside, for a generation or more, by the rapid growth of suburbs from the late nineteenth century onwards. While a pre- or early industrial tradition of country walking may have persisted in small towns and villages, the transformation of country walking into a mass social movement was intimately linked to the growth of suburbs and conurbations, which turned a walk in the country into a distinct leisure activity, requiring time, money and planning.

Rambling, as a collaborative, group activity, appears to have originated with the emergence of natural history societies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[6] Originally established to engage in rational debate, to record their discussions in *Transactions*, and to provide storage facilities for 'curiosities' and books, subscription fees to these societies were initially high, and membership tended to be exclusive. However, during the nineteenth century a new type of society emerged which, by holding its meetings in the field or in public houses, significantly reduced the cost of membership and broadened the social base from which members were drawn. At roughly the same time, Mechanics' Institutes and other adult education institutions also started to arrange 'natural history rambles' to places of scientific interest. According to David Allen, by the late nineteenth century there were at least 169 local scientific societies in Britain, of which 104 were field clubs. Some clubs added antiquarianism and archaeology to established field subjects such as botany and geology. According to Allen, the 'Nats' were typically rational Liberals, while the 'Ants' tended to be Tory and fashionably romantic.[7] He estimates that the total membership of these clubs reached 50,000 by 1900, a figure that, if true, exceeds estimates for the total membership of clubs affiliated to the Ramblers' Association in the 1930s.[8]

By the late nineteenth century, the link between science, art and country walking was well established. James Bryce's first Access to Mountains Bill in 1884 sought to legalise the right to walk over uncultivated private land 'for recreation or scientific or artistic study'. While many within upper-middle-class circles abandoned any pretence of rational enquiry as a justification for their pastime, within the social sphere occupied by 'respectable' skilled artisans and clerks, self-help and self-improvement continued

workers. Many mining communities retained similar traditions because they did not cease to be villages.

[6] Allen, *Naturalist in Britain*; Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch.3.

[7] W. J. Darby, *Landscape and Identity: Geographies of Nation & Class in England* (Oxford, 2000), 82, argues that antiquarianism was particularly linked to southern landscapes.

[8] Allen, *Naturalist in Britain*, 170.

to be highly prized virtues, and there remained a deep suspicion of frivolous leisure activities.[9] Scientific respectability, often couched in terms of gaining a greater knowledge of God through the perfection of His creation, was also useful in the context of Sunday rambles. William Woodruff recalled the zeal with which the sanctity of the Sabbath was protected in pre-War Blackburn: 'Sunday was a day of rest…Sport and entertainment were forbidden inside the town. Woebetide those who disregarded this unwritten code!'[10] But while sport and entertainment were forbidden within the town, walks in the surrounding country were widely condoned.

A detailed study of nineteenth-century natural history societies is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it appears that over time many societies became increasingly social in character. For some participants, natural history rambles no doubt continued to serve a 'rational' and improving function, as Taylor, Trentmann and Burchardt have argued.[11] Tom Stephenson, for example, gave a first-hand account of a mainly working-class natural history society in Lancashire before the War, which emphasised the educational role of their rambles.[12] However, Stephenson was a studious autodidact, who ultimately won one of two coveted scholarships to study geology at the Royal College of Science. He was probably not, therefore, representative of the rambling movement as a whole, and in many other cases the study of natural history appears to have provided a convenient pretext for an essentially social activity. The all-male members of the Haggerstone Entomological Society, for example, met in a room above the Brownlow Arms during the 1870s: 'Each member being provided with a long clay pipe, while the necessary refreshments were provided from below, under which soothing influences the science of Entomology was keenly pursued.' Contributions to the society's *Transactions* were made by a small number of members, some of whom were academics, but the Council noted that many younger members 'are afraid that they cannot write anything to which it would be worth the Society's while to listen' and membership stagnated at about 70. In order to ensure the continued survival of the club, it merged with the North London Natural History Society (ultimately becoming the London Natural History Society), which had a younger and larger membership, including women. The activities of this Society included rowing and bathing excursions

[9] See S. Smiles, *Self Help* (1859). E.g. P. Wild, 'Recreation in Rochdale, 1900-40', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher, and R. Johnson, eds., *Working Class Culture* (1979), 143-44, describes the social ambience of chapels and co-operative societies as 'censorious and clannish'. Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 1.

[10] W. Woodruff, *The Road to Nab End*, 2002 Abacus ed., 264 (first pubd.1993).

[11] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch.3; F. Trentmann, 'Review of "A Claim on the Countryside"', *Victorian Studies* 42, 3 (1999), 516; Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, ch.10.

[12] Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 68-69; Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch. 3.

on the River Lea, an annual Whitsuntide trip to the New Forest, as well as rambles in Epping Forest and the Chilterns. The president of the combined Society wondered: 'Was this welcome to ladies, combined of course with the equally broadminded natural history outlook, one of the secrets to the Society's success?'[13]

Without a thorough examination of the *Transactions* of nineteenth-century natural history societies, it is impossible to assess whether members 'familiar with the Linnean or the Natural System, who know the name and habitat of every plant within a day's walk from their dwellings' were listened to with respect and rapt attention, or whether they were treated with gentle forbearance by a majority of members more interested in excursions and rambles with the opposite sex.[14] But with a mass membership of 50,000, it seems likely that most members had both 'rational' and social motives.

Under pressure from the competing attractions of commercialised leisure, religious institutions sought to emulate the success of secular natural history societies and Mechanics' Institutes, using picnics, rambles and other excursions into the country as a means of attracting and retaining adherents to their creed. However, here too, tensions arose between the religious objectives of the leaders and the social and recreational aspirations of the members. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), formed in 1844, enthusiastically adopted the notion of 'muscular Christianity', encouraging its members to develop a healthy body, mind and spirit, and was one of the first adult-led youth movements to use outdoor pursuits to further its aims. The Liverpool branch of the YMCA established a rambling club in 1874, five years before Stephen started the Sunday Tramps. Manchester and Sheffield followed in the 1880s, and during the closing decades of the nineteenth century numerous churches, chapels and temperance societies across the country formed rambling clubs, which arranged walks on Saturday afternoons as an improving alternative to the pub.[15] Dominic Erdozain points out that the YMCA deliberately set out to attract both the 'decided' and the uncommitted Christian, but over time it became apparent that many members joined the Association solely in order to make use of its recreational facilities, while relatively few attended its prayer meetings or Bible classes. Just as many natural history societies gradually evolved into social rambling clubs, Erdozain argues that many church- and chapel-affiliated clubs also changed from 'a God-centred vision to a more

[13] 'The Society 1858 to 1957', *The London Naturalist*, 37 (1957), 2-9.
[14] E. Gaskell, *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848), 38.
[15] Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 87. The formation of the northern clubs coincided with the adoption of half day holidays on Saturdays in the Lancashire textile industry.

humanistic moralism', while the YMCA was virtually taken over by a philosophy of 'redemption-by-recreation'.[16]

Religion was also the primary motivation behind the formation of the Co-operative Holidays Association (CHA) and the Holiday Fellowship (HF), founded by Arthur Leonard in 1893 and 1913 respectively.[17] Leonard (born 1864) was a Congregationalist minister, temperance campaigner and member of the ILP. In 1893, he arranged a walking holiday in the Lake District for a small group of young mill workers in an attempt to lure them away from the traditionally rowdy Wakes Week holiday in Blackpool or Morecambe Bay.[18] His motivation was that 'the devil weilds [sic] no small influence over holiday times in particular, and there is therefore the greater need to bring the influence of Christ as an antagonistic force'.[19] The experiment was a success, and Leonard resigned his ministry and founded the CHA, which rapidly established a network of guest houses across the UK and subsequently Europe.[20] The term 'guest house' was taken from William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), to suggest a society of mutual help, devoid of forced labour.

The CHA was 'a potent mixture of self-help, co-operation, philanthropy, socialism, Christian moralising, conservative nostalgia for an imagined past, and a progressive pursuit of vigorous social action', according to Taylor.[21] It was also a bold experiment in social control. Bookings were only accepted

> on the understanding that guests will participate in excursions and in the full social life of the Centre…Guests who ignore this, and who seek their entertainment outside the house take up accommodation which would

[16] D. Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure: Sport, Recreation and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (Woodbridge, 2010), 10, 39, 191, 212-16.

[17] See T. A. Leonard, *Adventures in Holiday Making* (1934). Prynn, 'Clarion Clubs'; Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement' , ch.5; Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch.6; R. Ridley, '"Adventures in Holiday Making" - a Political Approach to Leisure: The Inspiration and Influence of T. Arthur Leonard', *Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society* 7, 10 (2007), 605-20; S. Barton, *Working Class Organisations and Popular Tourism 1840-1970* (Manchester, 2005), 144-45; Jones, *Workers at Play*, 64; R. Snape, 'The Co-Operative Holidays Association and the Cultural Formation of Countryside Leisure Practice', *Leisure Studies* 23, 2 (2004) 143-58.

[18] As late as 1980, the confluence of northern nonconformist morality and socialism remained a powerful influence within the rambling movement. Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 27, characterised the Wakes Week holidays as 'thoughtless spending of money and inane types of amusement'.

[19] From a sermon preached by Leonard in Colne in August 1891, quoted in Taylor, 'Ideological Evolution of an Outdoor Movement', 203.

[20] M. Freeman, 'Fellowship, Service and the "Spirit of Adventure": The Religious Society of Friends and the Outdoors Movement in Britain c1900-1950', *Quaker Studies* 14, 1 (2009), 79. (Leonard later became a Quaker.)

[21] Taylor, 'Ideological Evolution of an Outdoor Movement', 364.

> otherwise be occupied by those really interested in the Association. Such guests are not desired.[22]

The 'host and hostess' led morning prayers and all guests were expected to go on long rambles.[23] Songs and hymns were sung after a picnic lunch, and there was more singing and educational talks in the evenings. Any form of entertainment was strictly prohibited on Sundays.[24]

Leonard was influenced by John Paton (born 1830), principal of the Congregational Institute in Nottingham, where Leonard had trained to be a minister, and founder of the National Home Readers' Union.[25] Paton became the first president of the CHA and helped to shape its religious, educational and social mission. The CHA maintained close ties with the NHRU and other associations seeking to improve the lives of working people, such as the University Extension movement and the Workers Educational Association. As Leonard observed: 'Part of our C.H.A. ideal is to create a fellowship of readers as well as a fellowship of trampers.'[26] Numerous prominent social reformers and campaigners, including Canon Rawnsley, co-founder of the National Trust, volunteered their time to lecture at its guest houses and both the CHA and later the HF organized Goodwill Funds to provide subsidised holidays for the needy.

When the CHA was formed in 1893, the idea of allowing young, single men and women to go on holiday together was radical. However, the Association provided a safe and respectable environment which, despite the strict rules, provided a first taste of independence for many young, unmarried women. Like many of the rambling clubs that preceded it, one of the attractions of the CHA was the opportunity it afforded for relatively free intermingling of the sexes, and the CHA was soon affectionately known as the 'Catch-a-Husband Association', while the HF became 'Husbands Found'. Ben Anderson argues that the integration of domesticity in the guest houses and muscular activities on the mountains and moors helped to foster the notion of 'companionate marriage "partnerships"', and the personal accounts of holidays published in *Comradeship* and *Over the Hills* (the in-house magazines of the CHA and HF

[22] CHAA HIS/5.
[23] CHA GenCom minutes 6 May 1931 (CHA/ADM/1/6).
[24] CHA GenCom minutes 4 May 1932 and 6 Jan. 1933 (CHA/ADM/1/6).
[25] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 204.
[26] *Comradeship*, Sep. 1910, 3.

respectively) make it clear that both associations attracted an intensely loyal following.[27]

In the early years, CHA guests included 'mill workers, clerks, counterjumpers…a carpenter, some good bourgeois folk, a couple of university men…a newly married honeymoon couple from the Ancoats brotherhood…a Scottish apothecary and a dressmaker'.[28] Children were not allowed, so it tended to attract young or unmarried guests. The Association appealed particularly to people who were already members of church- or chapel-affiliated rambling clubs, or the NHRU, who valued both the outdoor and the educational opportunities on offer. Over time, however, as the loyal and socially ambitious membership of the CHA grew older and more prosperous, they became more assertive in their demands for greater comfort than the Spartan accommodation envisaged by Leonard. There is also some suggestion, even in the pre-War years, that the leadership and some longstanding members objected to the behaviour of certain younger guests. In 1910, for example, *Comradeship* complained about 'a growing tendency to rowdyism…senseless vulgar practical joking that frequently takes place in bedrooms', as well as 'singing and rocketing at large railway stations'.[29]

With the CHA and many of its members prospering, Leonard resigned as Secretary in 1913 and established the HF in a renewed attempt to attract working-class members, who he hoped would be more amenable to his austere moral code.[30] In a letter entitled 'Reasons for leaving the CHA', Leonard cited 'the influence of some of the ladies of the Domestic Committee', stating that

> the Association has drifted into extravagance in its selections of furnishings and fittings. Pile carpets…create a 'style' that attracts just the sort of person that the C.H.A. does not cater for, and whose coming is likely to give trouble to the movement.

He concluded that 'there is no alternative but to form another Association where middle class, conventional ideas, will not be the dominant factor'.[31] However, after the War, the HF also drifted into middle-class conventionality, acquiring numerous large, and in

[27] B. Anderson, 'Partnership or Co-Operation? Family, Politics and Strenuousness in the Pre-First World War Co-Operative Holidays Association', *Sport in History* 33, 3 (2013), 260.
[28] Leonard, *Adventures in Holiday Making*, 14.
[29] *Comradeship*, Dec.1910, 35.
[30] D. Hardman, *History of the Holiday Fellowship: Part One 1913-1940* (HF, 1981); H. Wroe, *The Story of HF Holidays* (2007).
[31] Letter to D. Fraser, 28 Nov.1912, CHAA HIS/16/3.

some cases palatial, country houses, which were being sold off cheaply by owners no longer able to maintain them.

The CHA, and subsequently the HF, gave rise to nationwide networks of affiliated rambling clubs, where members met and socialised between holidays. In many cases, these clubs formed a more important facet of members' social lives than their relatively infrequent stays at CHA or HF guest houses. While Leonard and the Executive Committees continued to exercise tight control over conduct in their guest houses, the affiliated clubs took on a distinctive local character that in some cases deviated markedly from the aspirations of the leadership. The 'gentrification' of the CHA was particularly pronounced in the South East, where the London CHA Club, founded in 1901, reached a peak membership of 1,000 in 1927.[32] Initially a pure rambling club, and founding member of the Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1905, a drama group was added in 1911, which gave performances of 'School for Scandal' and 'Much Ado About Nothing'. As its membership grew, the Club leased a house in Red Lion Square, Bloomsbury, including a restaurant open to the public. A Musical Society followed and for several years the Club hosted a 'London Eisteddfod' (several popular CHA guest houses were located in North Wales). There was also an active programme of evening lectures, often with a socialist or 'progressive' theme. George Bernard Shaw and May Morris both gave talks in 1918. The London CHA Club was exceptional, however, both for its size and the scope of its activities. Before the War, the predominant activity of most CHA-affiliated clubs was rambling, with occasional winter 'socials'.

Leonard's influence on the formal rambling movement was similar in some respects to Stephen's influence on the tramping and mountaineering movement.[33] A commemorative plaque above Derwentwater celebrates him as the 'founder of the open-air movement in this country', but it would be more accurate to describe Leonard as one of the principal architects of the formal, collaborative rambling movement. During the interwar years, CHA- and HF-affiliated rambling clubs provided around one third of the members and much of the funding for the regional Ramblers' Federations that ultimately united to form the Ramblers' Association. They also provided most of the leaders of the movement, many of whom were imbued with Leonard's Victorian ideals of Christian socialism, co-operation, self-help and self-improvement.

As well as religious, scientific and educational affiliations, some rambling clubs that emerged in late-nineteenth century also had ties to the access and preservation

[32] S. Brown, *A History of the London CHA Club 1901-1961* (1965).
[33] Ridley, 'Adventures in Holiday Making'.

movements. However, contrary to Taylor's assertion, anti-landlord activism was not confined to, nor even particularly characteristic, of the North.[34] The long-running battle to prevent the enclosure and development of Epping Forest, for example, included a spontaneous mass demonstration by some 5,000 local residents in 1879 and led, in 1884, to the formation of the Forest Ramblers, the oldest rambling club still in existence today.[35] The club was established to report any encroachment on the Forest to the City of London Corporation, which had been appointed as 'conservator' after a successful legal campaign led by the Commons Society.[36] Members of the Forest Ramblers included radical professionals, clerks and numerous shopkeepers, and it still maintains the tradition of arranging rambles on Thursday afternoons, which was half-day closing for shops north of the Thames in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[37] Overtly political, mainly socialist, rambling clubs that combined walks in the country with political discussion, also started to appear in the late nineteenth century.[38] The Bristol Socialist Rambling and Propaganda Society, founded in 1885, appears to have been one of the earliest.[39] Long walks formed an important adjunct to many Fabian meetings and summer schools, and the ILP, the co-operative movement, and local trade-union branches all organized rambling clubs.[40] The 'Merrie England' socialism of the Clarion movement also spawned numerous rambling and field clubs in London, Bristol, Blackburn, Burnley, Bolton and Glasgow, in addition to the celebrated Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' Club (SCR), founded by Bert Ward in 1901.[41]

The origins and affiliations of the pre-War rambling movement were therefore diverse, embracing science, education and religion, as well as politics and access. However, the variegated nature of the movement has been obscured, to some extent, by the academic attention given to a small number of unrepresentative clubs. The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, in particular, has been studied more than any other club in the country because of its remarkable series of annual *Handbooks. S*ome historians appear to believe that the opinions expressed within the *Handbooks* are representative

[34] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, ch.4.
[35] See Eversley, *Commons Forests and Footpaths*, 106, 110; D. Rubinstein, 'The Struggle for Ramblers' Rights', *New Society* 15 Apr. 1982, 85.
[36] See H. Everard, *An Octogenarian Club* (1964).
[37] www.forestramblers.org.uk/history (30 June 2016).
[38] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 77-78; S. Yeo, 'A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain 1883-1896', *History Workshop Journal* 4 (1977), 5-49.
[39] thebristolcable.org/2016/01/struggle-for-fun-leisure-and-knowledge (27 May 2016).
[40] E.g. MacKenzie N. & J., eds., *The Diary of Beatrice Webb* (London: Virago, 1985), vol. 3, 96, 397.
[41] D. Prynn, 'Clarion Clubs'.

of the Club, the region, or even the whole 'working-class' outdoor movement.[42] However, they essentially represent a record of the thoughts and deeds of one exceptional man. For 57 years, Bert Ward was both editor and main contributor to the *Handbooks*, providing a detailed programme of rambles (sometimes with meticulous hand-drawn maps); diligently researched notes on local archaeology, natural history, folklore and place-names; quotes from Wordsworth, Longfellow, Whitman and Carpenter (and occasional poems from Ward himself); together with commentary on contemporary developments in the outdoor, access and preservation movements.

Ward was an autodidact who left school at 14, but corresponded with Edward Carpenter and other socialists and anarchists as far afield as Spain (for which purpose he taught himself Spanish). In addition to the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, he founded the Hallamshire Footpath Protection Society in 1912; the Sheffield Association for the Protection of Local Scenery in 1924 (which later became the Sheffield branch of the CPRE); and the Sheffield and District Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1926.[43] In 1923 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in recognition of his contribution to toponymy. The major innovation introduced by the SCR when it was founded in 1901 was that it organized rambles on Sundays, rather than on Saturday afternoons – perhaps the first northern rambling club to do so, some 20 years after the London-based Sunday Tramps – which enabled members to undertake longer walks in more remote countryside. The first ramble (during which the formation of the club was discussed) was a circuit of Kinder Scout, an area of high moorland, roughly midway between Sheffield and Manchester, which subsequently played a central role in the history and mythology of the access movement. Writing in 1933, Ward recalled the small group of men and women who joined him on that first walk:

> The few who responded to our call to ramble were for the most part the studious mechanic or clerk who, following the professional man, Thoreau, Whitman, and Ruskin, found that in very truth Sunday with Nature was the day

[42] See Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside',181-84; Prynn, 'Clarion Clubs'; Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 31-34; Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside'; Lowerson and Howkins, 'Leisure in the Thirties'; Walker, 'Outdoor Movement', ch.4; S. G. Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class; Organised Labour and Sport in Inter-War Britain* (Manchester, 1988), 30-32; R. Holt, *Sport and the British*; D. Sissons, 'A Sheffield Clarion Rambler: Some Aspects of the Life and Work of G. H. B. Ward (1876-1957)' (MA, Sheffield University, 1992); D. Sissons, ed., *The Best of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers' Handbooks* (Tiverton, 2002); M. Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity'; *One Hundred Years of Rambling 1900-2000: To Mark the Centenary of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers* (Sheffield, 2000); B. Edwards, 'A Rambler Made', *Dore to Door* 2001; A. Holt, *G. H. B. Ward 1876-1957* (1985). Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside* 82-85. Taylor even attributes the Kinder Trespass to the SCR (p.259), although it is not clear on what basis.

[43] CPRE Sheffield & Peak District Branch, *Fifty-Five Years' Work*.

> with God and what God is intended to bring – physical and mental happiness and not dogma and ceremonial.[44]

Ward passionately believed that 'a rambler made is a man improved', and saw rambling as 'a microcosm of the wider struggles of the dispossessed against the landowning classes'.[45] His study of local history revealed numerous rights of way in Peak District that had been lost, through lack of use or deliberate closure by landowners, and Ward resolved to right past wrongs. But Ward was also capable of expressing romantic, pantheistic sentiments that were strikingly similar to those of trampers such as Stephen:

> Rambling is an intense love for one's own country, the innermost and most remote parts of it, the sweetest as well as the wildest, a love for the wind and the rain, the snow and the frost, the hill and the vale, the wildest open spaces and the choicest pastoral and arboreal retreats…a love which, more than the physical side of enlisting good health, compels a devotion and an adoration which is equal to some men's religion.[46]

Ward's socialism owed more to Morris than Marx, and the assertion that the SCR was the first 'working-class' rambling club is misleading. Research by David Sissons suggests that its membership, like that of most pre-War rambling clubs, consisted of skilled workers, clerks and shopkeepers, occupying the blurred boundary between the working and middle classes.[47] In London, the pre-War members of the Morley College Ramblers, for example, came from a very similar background, although a higher proportion was employed in commerce rather than in industry, reflecting local employment patterns. Originally a temperance music hall, offering 'purified entertainment…and no intoxicating drinks', Morley evolved during the 1880s into an adult education college, with a strong reputation for commercial subjects, languages, music and drama. The College served as both an educational and social hub for ambitious, young working people living in Lambeth and Southwark and the student list for 1911, one year before the rambling club was founded, included 386 clerks, 43

[44] *SCRH* (1933/4), 93.
[45] The slogan of the SCR appeared on the cover of every *Handbook* from 1906-1965; *SCRH* (1942-43), quoted in *One Hundred Years of Rambling 1900-2000*, 22; Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', 182.
[46] *SCRH* (1934-35), 121.
[47] Sissons, 'Sheffield Clarion Rambler', 16-21.

dress makers, 27 shorthand typists, 25 warehousemen, 25 civil servants, 21 shop assistants, 20 compositors, 17 typists and 16 engineers.[48]

As the foregoing description of the pre-War movement suggests, across England and Wales, most rambling clubs arose out of pre-existing scientific, educational, religious or political institutions. The Ranken Rambling Club, founded in London in 1905, was a relatively rare exception, proudly advertising itself as 'one of the few Clubs with open membership, i.e., not connected to any society or organisation'.[49] Likewise, the Chums' Rambling Club, founded in 1910, which met at the White Swan on Coleman Street in the City, made no pretence of serving a higher educational, religious or political purpose.[50] In contrast, there was a much longer tradition of purely social walking clubs in Scotland. Among the earliest was the Cobbler Club of Glasgow, founded in 1866 for those who wished to climb

> the Cobbler and whatever other worthy hill can be reached in the course of a Saturday expedition from Glasgow…[and] to crown the labour of the day by such an evening of social enjoyment as can be spent by those who have a sniff of fine mountain air during the day.[51]

Several of these Scottish hill walking clubs pre-dated the socially-exclusive Cairngorm Club (founded in 1887 in Aberdeen) and Scottish Mountaineering Club (1889, Edinburgh) and appear to have arisen entirely independently of the upper-middle-class mountaineering tradition.

As rambling clubs across England and Wales developed and expanded in the early twentieth century, they too began to loosen their ties to the founding individual or institution, becoming increasingly social in character. Many members of natural history field clubs appear to have taken little part in their learned activities; church and chapel rambling clubs became increasingly secular; 'socialist' rambling clubs continued to reflect the political sympathies of the communities they served, but most ceased to engage in any form of activism; and clubs linked to educational institutions continued to arrange rambles long after their members had completed their studies. The Polytechnic Ramblers' Club, for example, founded at the Regent Street Polytechnic in London in 1885, continues to the present day, but no longer has any connection to the founding institution. The original notice proposing the formation of the Club suggests

[48] J. Vaux, ed., *Morley College Rambling Club: 1912-2012* (2012), 1.
[49] Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 137.
[50] *Ramblers' Handbook* (1915), 94; *Chums' Rambling Club Retrospect* (1982).
[51] Clark and Pyatt, *Mountaineering in Britain*, 33.

that its founders always envisaged that it would primarily serve a social, rather than a 'rational' function when they summoned 'the botanist, the antiquarian, the mineralogist, the humourist, the vocalist' and anyone who might help to make their rambles 'amusing, instructive and enjoyable'.[52] The first AGM was held at the Cocoa Tree Temperance Tavern in Pinner and ladies were soon invited to join certain expeditions, including the annual 'nutting ramble' to Boxhill, 'noted not so much for the plenitude of nuts as for their…deadly peril for bachelors'. A separate ladies' rambling club was established at the Polytechnic in 1910. Both clubs organized walks from April to October, and arranged joint visits to art galleries and museums, as well as dances and socials, during the winter months. Likewise, although the official name of the rambling club at Morley College was the Scientific, Photographic and Rambling Club, it was affectionately known as the 'picnic and flirtation club'.[53]

As the number of ramblers and clubs increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were calls in various parts of country for the establishment of a body to represent the interests of recreational walkers. Taylor argues that these bodies, which evolved into the regional Ramblers' Federations and ultimately merged to become the Ramblers' Association, were primarily concerned with access and that it was this, ideologically motivated, campaigning activity that gave rise to what he calls the 'substantive interwar outdoor movement'.[54] However, there were significant variations in the formative influences and objectives of these regional alliances.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Taylor's decision to conflate the outdoor movement and campaign for access to open country inevitably causes him to locate 'the earliest roots and much of the subsequent development of the movement in the industrial areas [of the North]…specifically in Lancashire and Yorkshire towns'.[55] However, the first attempt to form a regional coalition of rambling clubs actually took place in Glasgow, where the West of Scotland Ramblers' Alliance, representing ten clubs, was formed in 1892. The first meeting was convened by the YMCA to discuss the 'the advantages of rambling as a means of recreation and education'.[56] The second, and more significant, pre-War alliance was the Federation of Rambling Clubs, established in London in 1905, initially with twelve constituent clubs. The Federation was open to 'rambling clubs, natural history societies, field clubs and kindred organisations' and its purpose

[52] G. Chandra, *The Polytechnic Rambling Club 1885 to 2002* (London: 2003), 2, 3.
[53] Vaux, ed., *Morley College Rambling Club*, 2.
[54] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 13 and ch.7.
[55] Taylor, 'Ideological Evolution of an Outdoor Movement', 4. Walton, 'The Northern Rambler', 266.
[56] *Glasgow Herald*, 26 Dec.1892. Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 26; Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 24.

was to promote and protect ramblers' rights; to secure favourable fares on railways and other travel facilities; to secure special facilities for visiting places of historic interest or natural beauty; and to share information.[57]

Despite referring to the protection of ramblers' rights in its objects, the Federation did not itself act as a campaigning organisation. Instead, it effectively outsourced this activity to the Commons Society, with which it had close ties through its co-founder, Lawrence Chubb, secretary of the Commons Society from 1896 to 1948. Chubb also had links to the National Trust. He had been a 'keen young student at the London [Regent Street] Polytechnic' when he was picked out by Sir Robert Hunter to become the Trust's first salaried employee, and Sir Robert agreed to serve as the first president of the Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1905.[58] He was succeeded in 1913 by Sir Frederick Pollock, former 'guide' to the Sunday Tramps.

The *Ramblers' Handbook*, published each year by the Federation of Rambling Clubs, included reports on the activities of the Commons Society and the National Trust, but the contents strongly suggest that the main benefits of membership were the favourable fares on railways and other travel facilities that the Federation secured, and the information it provided to walkers. The *Handbooks* included railway timetables, details of concessionary fares (including specially negotiated 'go-as-you-please' tickets that enabled walkers to travel to one station and return from another) and lists of recommended 'houses for refreshment'. They also contained descriptions of walks in the Home Counties and beyond, articles on natural history and places of interest, and book reviews. Contrary to Taylor's assertion of the primacy of the campaign for access, the Federation therefore functioned primarily as a consumers' association, rather than a campaigning organization.

Chubb, a member of the Forest Ramblers, and Jim Southern, a member of the Highbury United Rambling Club, were co-founders and joint Hon. Secretaries of the Federation, and the Executive Committee initially consisted of representatives from the founding clubs, which included three with church affiliations, the Oxford & Bermondsey Mission Rambling Club, the Polytechnic Ramblers, the London CHA Club and the Clarion Field Club.[59] The number of affiliated clubs expanded rapidly in subsequent years and by 1914 the Federation was selling 10,000 copies of the *Ramblers' Handbook* for 3d each, which probably gives a rough indication of the membership of

[57] The purpose was reiterated in the first edition of the *Ramblers' Handbook* to appear after the War in 1921.
[58] Williams, *The Commons Society*, 20.
[59] 'Federation of Rambling Clubs', *The Rambler*, Sep.1905, 3.

affiliated clubs, and demonstrates the strength of the pre-War rambling movement in London and the South East.

The Post-War Rambling Movement

Like the senior mountaineering clubs discussed in Chapter 3, the rambling movement recovered slowly after the War. The first post-War edition of the *Ramblers' Handbook* appeared in 1921, after a five-year gap. The list of affiliated clubs closely resembles the pre-War list, including clubs affiliated to churches, chapels, the YMCA, the CHA and the HF; polytechnic, university and Old Boys' clubs; and numerous natural history, antiquarian and preservation societies. There were also Jewish, Scottish, Manx and women's rambling clubs; clubs linked to major white-collar employers (such as banks and local government); but relatively few 'open' rambling clubs, available to members who did not share some other form of affiliation.

In 1922, the Federation resolved to remove the names of affiliated clubs that had not paid their subscription since the armistice: 'The result is to show a slightly lower active membership [in 1922] than obtained in 1914, in spite of the access of several new Clubs to affiliation.' [60] An editorial in 1931 celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Chums' Rambling Club, noting that 'so many Clubs failed to revive after the War'. However, by the mid-1920s the Federation was experiencing rapid growth, with clubs affiliating from as far afield as Portsmouth, Cardiff, Bristol, Norwich, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle.

Table 2: Membership of the CHA and HF

	1913	1918	1920	1930	1938
CHA Members	15,961	8,797	17,486	26,789	31,071
Affiliated Rambling Clubs		47	47	69	74
HF Members	0	3,664	6,398	31,087	45,169
Affiliated Rambling Clubs				65	83

Source: CHA and HF ARs 1913-38.

[60] *Rambler's Handbook* (1922), 15.

Membership of the CHA halved during the War and the HF, founded in 1913, initially struggled to survive, but both organisations recovered in the post-War years and by the mid-1920s were experiencing rapid growth, as shown in Table 2. The number of affiliated rambling clubs also increased, although in some cases their links to the parent associations became increasingly tenuous. During the interwar years, as the socially ambitious membership of the CHA and the HF aged and prospered, the character of both organisations began to change, particularly in South East. The London CHA Club added two private tennis courts and organised a regular programme of talks by University Extension lecturers, including Cyril Joad.[61] An Operatic Society put on performances of Gilbert and Sullivan and the Musical Society had 88 playing members. Saturday afternoon rambles were abandoned in 1926 because of the overwhelming popularity of Sunday rambles, which had started as an unofficial breakaway activity in the early 1920s. There were also revues, pantomimes, fancy dress parties and CHAotic concert parties, often with specially composed songs and verses celebrating characters in the Club, as well as annual black-tie dinners with numerous speeches and toasts (in water). Meanwhile, the annual report of the CHA continued to extol the spiritual and moral purpose of the movement and the virtues of the simple life.

Some affiliated clubs severed all ties to the parent association. In 1930, the CHA gave birth to a mountaineering club whose members put up some impressively hard rock climbs in the Lake District in the early 1930s (which were largely ignored by the climbing establishment in the FRCC). The club disaffiliated from the CHA in 1935 and renamed itself the Tricouni Club.[62] But in other parts of the country, the local CHA and HF rambling clubs remained more faithful to the intentions of the leadership. The Bolton HF Rambling Club, founded in 1922, for example, continued to organise walks on Saturday afternoons and 'it was common practice for songs to be sung after sandwiches had been dispatched… Sometimes there were hymns, particularly those about the joys of nature.'[63] Such differences were partly manifestations of local cultural traditions, but they also reflected sharp regional variations in economic performance, and the rapid expansion of the middle classes in London and the South East.

[61] Brown, *History of the London CHA Club*.
[62] CHA ExCo minutes 1930 and 1935. K. Smith, 'A Meteor of the Thirties', *Climber & Rambler,* 16, 6 (1977).
[63] W. Jones and D. Leeming, *Bolton HF Walking Club: The First Eighty Years 1922-2002* (Bolton, 2002), 22.

As well as becoming older and more prosperous, on average, the proportion of single female members of the CHA and the HF also increased after the War.[64] While there were numerous institutions catering to the social needs of single men, there were relatively few opportunities for energetic, respectable, unmarried working women to socialise outside their homes, and in the aftermath of a War that had killed 700,000 British servicemen there was a significant gender imbalance within the age group served by the CHA and HF. The Birmingham CHA Club was one of several affiliated clubs that imposed a rule limiting female membership to a maximum of two thirds of the total in the 1920s, in order not to deter males from joining.[65] In 1934, Sydney Moorhouse, a member of the senior Rucksack Club (which remained resolutely all-male until 1990) observed that 'it is perfectly obvious…that these [rambling clubs] depend on ladies for the greatest proportion of their numbers', but noted that most of the 'leaders' continued to be male: 'I once came across a North country rambling club consisting of twenty-seven ladies and one man! He was the president and told me that he would have turned back but for the fact that his wife insisted that he should carry on.'[66]

By the early 1930s, Leonard, who was then in his mid-60s, was spending an increasing amount of his time working for the YHA, in yet another attempt to create an outdoor organization that would appeal to working-class members. In 1934, he acknowledged that younger walkers had abandoned the CHA and HF in favour of the YHA because of 'the simplicity, the freedom to plan their own movements, the greater strenuousness and (yes, it is true) the cheapness'.[67] Under pressure from their increasingly affluent members, and growing competition from the commercial sector, both the CHA and the HF had invested in improving the amenities of their guest houses, which in turn had increased the cost of the holidays and deterred younger and poorer members. However, while cost was certainly a consideration, the main attraction of the YHA was the youthfulness of its membership and the relative absence of rules (and of adults to enforce them).[68]

In 1936, the General Committee of the CHA also recognised that they were failing to attract younger members. Nevertheless, at the AGM that year, a motion calling for table tennis and putting to be permitted at guest houses on Sundays was defeated.[69]

[64] Anderson, 'Partnership or Co-Operation?', 262; Gilchrist, 'Gender and British Climbing'.
[65] D. Attwell, *75 Years of Rambling with Birmingham CHA* (Birmingham, 1979), 11.
[66] *T&C*, Aug.1934, 183 and 166.
[67] Leonard, *Adventures in Holiday Making*, 132.
[68] See Chapter 6.
[69] CHA AGM minutes, 11 Jan.1936.

At a special strategy meeting of the General Committee of the CHA in 1938, Henry Weston, who became General Secretary when Leonard resigned in 1913, finally acknowledged the reality of the situation: 'The C.H.A. was originally inclusive, but in the course of time it had tended to change its character and was becoming exclusive.'[70] By this time, clubs affiliated to the CHA and the HF represented almost one third of the formal rambling movement, as well as providing most of its leaders.

As interest in the outdoors rekindled in early 1920s, rambling clubs started to proliferate across the country, and there were renewed calls for the formation of regional bodies to represent walkers' interests. In 1923, the *Handbook* of the London-based Federation of Rambling Clubs reported that 'an organisation has been founded in Manchester…with objects similar to the Federation'.[71] It welcomed the development and passed on the names of a number of clubs in the North West that had sought affiliation to the London-based organization. The origins of the Manchester Federation date from a meeting held in the Clarion Café in Manchester in 1919 during which a 'Ramblers' Council' was formed. A rival Federation of Ramblers' Clubs formed shortly afterwards, but in 1922 the two organizations amalgamated to form the Manchester & District Federation of Rambling Clubs.[72] Like the (London) Federation, the Manchester Federation produced an annual *Handbook*, which was edited by Edwin Royce. A third Federation was formed one year later in Liverpool, with Alf Embleton acting as secretary, and in 1926 Bert Ward convened a meeting of ramblers in Sheffield, where a fourth Federation was established.

These four Federations – London, Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield – formed the core of the formal, collaborative rambling movement during the 1920s, before the dramatic growth of hiking in the early 1930s. In histories of the outdoor movement, the pronouncements of their leaders are often taken to reflect the views of their affiliated clubs. However, there is little to suggest that the mainly middle-aged men who volunteered their time to serve on the various Federation committees were representative of the broader movement. George Mitchell, who succeeded Lawrence Chubb as secretary of the London Federation in 1929, Edwin Royce in Manchester, and Alf Embleton in Liverpool were all introduced to rambling by the CHA or the HF, and all were imbued with Leonard's Victorian idealism, and his conviction that rambling was a means to improve both the individual and society. Bert Ward had no connection

[70] CHA GenCom minutes, 12 Nov.1938.
[71] *Rambler's Handbook* (1923), 20.
[72] A. W. Hewitt, *The Ramblers' Federation: Nineteen Years of Progress in Manchester and District* (Manchester, 1938); Anderson, 'Liberal Countryside'; Anderson, 'Manchester Ramblers Federation'.

to the CHA and, as discussed above, the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers proudly rambled on the Sabbath and frequently stopped at pubs to eat their sandwiches. Yet in other respects, Ward's utopian socialism and quest for self-improvement differed little from Leonard's philosophy.[73] Furthermore, Ward like Royce, the editor of the Manchester Federation *Handbook*, was a passionate advocate of access to open country. During the interwar years, this issue became the defining policy objective of the Manchester and Sheffield Federations.

Illustration 10: National Council of Ramblers' Federations, Executive Committee, 1934. Left to right: Unknown, Stephen Morton, Jim Southern, Alf Embleton, George Mitchell, Arthur Leonard, unknown, Arthur Hewitt, Edwin Royce, and a Scottish representative (RA).

The move to form separate Federations in Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield reflected the growth of a new kind of regionalism in Britain. According to Dave Russell, the notion of a 'North-South divide' entered common parlance during the interwar years, as increasing mobility drew attention to the dramatically different economic performance and living standards in the two regions.[74] With textiles and heavy industry in secular decline, newer light manufacturing concentrated in the Midlands and the

[73] Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 31-9.
[74] D. Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester, 2004), 27.

South East, and the cultural hegemony of London reinforced by Fleet Street and the BBC, the provincial cities of the North felt increasingly marginalised. Regional pride and self-identity, which had once found expression in great feats of engineering and extravagant municipal buildings, found a new outlet in a growing attachment to the mountains and moorlands surrounding the depressed townscapes of the North.[75]

Royce was an insurance clerk. Ward worked in local government. Russell describes the lower-middle class as a group 'notably prone to social insecurities and status anxieties' and observes that this social group played a significant role in the development of nationalist movements in continental Europe and the growth of regionalism in Britain during the interwar years. The rambling movement conforms to his definition of an activity providing 'rich opportunities for the garnering and exhibition of skills that could be obtained without recourse to expensive training or elite social groups…[providing] aspiring social groups or socially aspiring individuals much valuable cultural and social capital'.[76] Similarly, Raphael Samuel noted that the local antiquarian and natural history societies that formed the traditional core of the rambling movement, gave 'a privileged place to local knowledge. Territorial attachments both real and imagined are its stock in trade.'[77] David Lowenthal points out that nostalgia for both real and imagined landscapes of the past can be a strong motivating force, validating action seeking to right past wrongs and providing a sense of personal and community identity and commitment to a cause.[78] By revealing the natural beauty and local history of the landscapes surrounding the heavily industrialised and economically depressed towns and cities of the North, the rambling movement helped to foster a sense of both regional identity and social injustice. Among the leaders of the Manchester and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations, these sentiments coalesced around the campaign for access to the privately-owned grouse moors of Derbyshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

In 1930, when the youthful hiking craze was reaching its peak, the bedrock of support for the regional Ramblers' Federations, and most of the funding and volunteers who served on their committees, still came from clubs affiliated to the CHA, the HF and from local natural history societies. The list of clubs affiliated to the Manchester Federation in 1930, for example, included the Altrincham and District Natural History and Literary Society, the Bolton Field Naturalists Society, the Bury Natural History

[75] Samuel, *Island Stories*, 60-61; Westaway, 'The German Community in Manchester'.
[76] Russell, *Looking North*, 282.
[77] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 277.
[78] D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), 12.

Society, the Edgeley Botanical Society, the Glossop Field Naturalist Society, the Heywood & District Botanical Society, the Manchester Field Naturalists' and Archaeologists' Society, the Manchester Microscopical Society, the Stockport Field Club and the United Field Naturalists Society.[79] Throughout the interwar years, Royce and Ward continued to devote many pages of the Manchester Federation *Handbook* and the *Sheffield Clarion Handbook* to diligently researched notes on local geology, botany, history, archaeology and folklore. But, as Allen points out, by the interwar years most local natural history societies were in terminal decline, with a rapidly ageing and deeply conservative membership, while the hiking craze represented 'an aggressive break with the past and the defiance by Youth of Age'. The Cambrian Archaeological Society, for example, was aghast when a young expert, engaged to lead a field visit, appeared before them in shorts, and even young men in plus fours were regarded as 'bolshies'.[80]

While the leaders of the Ramblers' Federations sought to uphold the values and traditions of the pre-War rambling movement, the broader outdoor movement was undergoing a period of unprecedented change, with a vast influx of younger walkers. In 1928, A. G. Thompson, chairman of the London Federation, identified three types of affiliated club: '(a) those run in conjunction with a Holiday Association, an Old Boys Association, or a Polytechnic; (b) those which specialise in Photography, Field Work, Natural History or Antiquarian Interests, and (c) lastly, what may be termed the "open" club.'[81] He observed that clubs established since the War were overwhelmingly of the purely social 'open' type, unaffiliated to any cause or institution. The new mood in the outdoor movement was youthful, gregarious and optimistic, and many of the post-War clubs that sought affiliation to the Federations reflected this attitude. Some were brazen about their social function, such as the Unattached Rambling Club in Bury; others made reference to popular culture, like the Good Companions' Rambling Club in the East End of London.[82] Those that were affiliated to other institutions tended to be internationalist in their outlook, including numerous Peace Movement, League of Nations and Esperanto Rambling Clubs, in sharp contrast to the nostalgic parochialism of local natural history and antiquarian societies.[83]

[79] *M&DRFH* (1930).
[80] Allen, *Naturalist in Britain*, 227.
[81] *OoD*, July 1928, 130.
[82] J. B. Priestley, *The Good Companions* (1929), one of the best-selling novels of the interwar period, 'appropriates the open road theme for purposes of optimistic propaganda', according to Fussell, *Abroad*, 58.
[83] E.g. list of affiliated clubs in the *Ramblers' Handbook* (1930).

In Scotland, where there was a much longer tradition of purely social hill-walking clubs, and the influence of the CHA and the HF was less pronounced, the Glasgow & West of Scotland Ramblers' Federation noted that 'natural history, flowers, animals, geology, village customs, and place-names of the local countryside, these are deemed highbrow, if they are considered at all by the average rambler'.[84] A Scottish tramper, reflecting in 1931 on the dramatic social changes that had occurred within the outdoor movement since the War, wrote:

> When the craze for excitement, which afflicted us during the immediate post-war days, had spent itself, the countryside came into its own. Tramping suddenly rose to the heights of popularity, till now it is a fashion – being able to throw a rucksack over one's shoulder and proclaim to the world 'I am a hiker'…[M]any members of clubs are members because of the social life, and not because of the tramping…Instead of discussing the sculpture of the earth and the fullness of life and beauty which is upon it, many club members are engrossed with the latest dance or talkie.[85]

As Chapter 5 will show, most of the post-War generation of hikers (as defined in this thesis) did not join formal rambling clubs but, as this quote suggests, a significant number created their own distinctive sub-culture within established adult-led clubs. However, their presence within the formal rambling movement is almost completely overshadowed by the leaders, most of whom were from a completely different generation.

The Sheffield Clarion Ramblers is one of the best-documented rambling clubs in the country, but Ward was such a dominant figure that the younger members of the Club are almost invisible. As Walker notes: 'Reference…in the *Handbook* was made to the fact that Treasurer Whitney was a seventeen stone, ex-champion amateur boxer and wrestler but apart from chance remarks such as these…little of the occupation of the Clarion members has come to light.'[86] The rare accounts of the Club's activities in the interwar years that do exist, apart from the SCR *Handbooks*, which were almost entirely penned by Ward, suggest that, by the 1930s he had become an increasingly isolated, though still respected, figure. Membership of the SCR rarely exceeded a few hundred, not least because many members 'could not tolerate his sometimes authoritarian attitudes…Several walking clubs owed their beginnings to splinter groups

[84] 'The Future of Rambling', *G&WSRFH* (1931), 25.
[85] 'This Tramping', *G&WSRFH* (1931), 61.
[86] Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement', 128.

which broke away from Ward's Clarion.'[87] According to Byne and Sutton, it was mainly the younger members who left.[88] George Marshall (born 1904), who was a member of the SCR in the 1920s and '30s, gives a rare glimpse of how the post-War generation viewed the Club. In 1923, when Marshall was 19, he and two friends set out for a week's walking tour of the Peak District, daringly attired in shorts, and soon became 'the centre of attention for ignorant and uninitiated persons'. In 1932, he took part in the Kinder Trespass, which Ward opposed. Photographs of Club rambles taken by Marshall show groups of men in the early 1920s wearing flannel trousers, tweed jackets, waistcoats with watch chains, shirts, ties and flat caps. Ward continued to wear similar rambling clothes until his death in 1957. However, by 1926 the photographs show that most Clarion Ramblers had discarded their ties, shorts were increasingly common, and there were significantly more young women in the group photographs.[89] In 1922, Ward encouraged members

> To be a Clarion Rambler, and learn to be a man,
> And never be a 'Flapper' girl, but wander while you can[90]

but a press article from an unidentified local newspaper, reporting on the 'Clarion Ramblers' Merry Meeting in the Peak District' on New Year's Day 1929, stated that the gathering attracted 'grey haired veterans, short-skirted and knickerbockered flappers, and youths wearing, even in this cold weather, shorts and open shirts'.[91]

Previous histories of the interwar rambling movement have placed undue emphasis on the records left by men, like Ward and Royce, who were imbued with values of the pre-War movement. Until Ward's death in 1957, the *SCR Handbook*, continued to include quotes from Wordsworth, Jefferies and Hudson, but the only interwar writer to earn his admiration was Orwell, possibly because of his involvement in the Spanish civil war.[92] Royce was of a similar age, and was proud to be described by colleagues as 'one of our Victorian statesmen' in 1936.[93] As the hiking craze gathered pace, the attitudes to, and usage of the country by the pre- and the post- War generations diverged to such an extent that the older generation simply could not understand what motivated young people to go into the countryside. Henry Weston, who succeeded Leonard as General

[87] T. Fletcher, 'Answering Ward's Clarion Call', *Peak District Magazine* 2000, 20-21.
[88] Byne and Sutton, *High Peak*, 80.
[89] A. Beedham, *Days of Sunshine and Rain: Rambling in the 1920s* (Sheffield, 2011), 78, 64.
[90] 'The Trespasser's Song' (1922), Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 103.
[91] RAA (02/446). Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity' argues that, while Ward tolerated female ramblers on easy walks, he regarded hard walking on the moors as a 'manly' activity.
[92] See Sissons, 'Sheffield Clarion Rambler', ch. 5.
[93] *Northern Rambler*, July 1936, 120.

Secretary of the CHA in 1913, observed in 1930 that 'gallivanting about the country in highly sensational rambling costumes is a healthy enough game, but an organisation that provides rational interests and creates an *esprit de corp* for these young people will be doing a valuable social work'.[94] Likewise, Royce condemned the 'superficial person who takes up rambling because it enables him or her to indulge in a childish taste for fancy dress or who looks on the countryside as merely a place for skylarking. When they have put away childish things we shall be pleased to see them…helping with the serious side of rambling on the Federation Council.'[95] None of this suggests continuity between the pre-War rambling movement and the post-War hiking craze.

The Campaign for Access to Open Country

During the War, and in the immediate post-War years, the campaign for access ceased to exist. When James Bryce died in 1922, neither the *Manchester Guardian* nor the *Daily Telegraph* (within a few years, a vocal advocate and opponent, respectively, of access to open country) mentioned his long parliamentary campaign for Access to Mountains in their obituaries. Even Bryce's close friend and fellow Sunday Tramp, Douglas Freshfield, omitted the subject in his obituary in *Nature*. Only the *Morning Post* mentioned, in passing, that 'one of his pet subjects during these years, as it continued to be throughout his public life, was the preservation of and access to open spaces'.[96]

As interest in the outdoors rekindled in the early 1920s, so too did the campaign for access. The Scottish Rights of Way Society was revived in 1923, and Piers Gilchrist Thompson, Liberal MP for Torquay, introduced a private member's Bill the following year, reiterating Bryce's call for Access to Mountains. The renewed interest was triggered, in part, by the publication in 1923 of *The Highlands with Rope and Rucksack* by Dr Ernest Baker (born 1869), a Derby-based tramper and climber who was a member of the Climbers' Club and the Rucksack Club.[97] The timing of Baker's book was fortuitous. In the wake of the 1921 and 1922 Everest expeditions, and with plans underway for a further 'assault' in 1924, media interest in mountaineering, both at home and abroad, was high. However, the main message of Baker's book was the difficulty of gaining access to many of the mountains of Scotland, because of the closure of footpaths and inns by landowners intent on deterring walkers from entering their deer forests. Baker contrasted Scotland with the right to roam in the Alps and

[94] 'A British Youth Movement', Mar. 1930, 8 (CHAA ADM/12/10).
[95] *M&DRFH* (1932), 10.
[96] Obituaries 23, 24 and 26 Jan. 1922, respectively.
[97] E. A. Baker, *The Highlands With Rope and Rucksack* (1923).

called for renewed action to give the public access to the British hills. He dedicated his book to James Bryce.

Baker's book was widely and sympathetically reviewed in the national press. The *Manchester Guardian* struck a populist note, characterising Scottish landowners as war profiteers: 'It is left to the war profiteer to rival in Great Britain the anti-social offences of the alien autocrat'.[98] However, a review in the Aberdeen-based *Cairngorm Club Journal* (the senior club most closely associated with Bryce and the pre-War access campaign) noted that advocacy of 'the once familiar topic of "access to mountains"…is today less keen and strenuous and much less acrimonious than it was a generation ago'.[99] Following the popular success of *The Highlands with Rope and Rucksack*, Baker extended his call for access to the Peak District, in an article in the Manchester *Ramblers' Handbook* entitled 'The Forbidden Land':

> One unlucky day, grouse-shooting became a pastime with the idle rich, and the policy of shutting up the open wild gradually began. Nobody was yet alive enough to the charm of these vast solitudes to raise objection…Now, however, it is becoming at length an obvious fact, and we wonder how our fathers could have failed to appreciate it, that the open spaces of the Pennines are the back garden, the recreation ground, for the crowded millions of workers in the adjoining towns.[100]

Baker contrasted the lack of access in the Peak District to the success of the Commons Society in protecting access to open spaces around London: 'There is an impression abroad that Londoners, compared with their pugnacious brethren further north, are inept at vindicating their rights against powerful aggressors…It does not seem to be the case.'

Newspaper reaction to Gilchrist Thompson's 1924 Access to Mountains Bill was mixed, even in the northern regional press. The *Manchester Guardian* welcomed it, noting that 'throughout the length of the Pennine range of hills large urban populations on both their flanks have awakened to a sense of their incomparable value as places of recreation for body and mind'.[101] However, on the other side of the Pennines, the *Yorkshire Post* supported stronger legislation to protect public rights of way, but opposed access to open country, fearing charabanc parties of townsfolk crying 'we

[98] *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Apr.1923.
[99] *CaCJ*, July 1923, 40.
[100] E. A. Baker, *M&DRFH* (1924), 23, 24.
[101] *Manchester Guardian*, 2 and 9 May 1924.

have drunk all the bottled beer, we have smashed all the bottles; let us set fire to the heather and go home'.[102] The *Dundee Advertiser* (reflecting popular Scottish sentiment) supported the measure, but *Country Life* unashamedly opposed Access to Mountains and defended the Highland clearances: 'The man who encouraged – in some cases enforced – emigration to a new land beyond the seas…was a benefactor to the Highland crofter…He turned his barren mountains to the only purpose for which they are fit – grazing ground for the wild red deer.'[103] Among the national papers, the *Observer* and the *Daily Mail* were broadly supportive, but in an article headlined 'Mountains and Molehills', *The Times* opposed the measure:

> The grievance which it purports to remove has little real existence…Those who really love the country for itself, who delight (as it is said the PRIME MINISTER does) in long walks, know well enough by experience that…they are free enough to wander where they like, provided always that they show a due consideration for the convenience and the rights of other people.[104]

When Gilchrist Thompson's Bill failed to achieve a second reading, Charles Trevelyan attempted to introduce another Access to Mountains private member's Bill in 1926. The Manchester Ramblers' Federation and the newly formed Sheffield Federation organized a joint rally in support of Trevelyan's Bill in the natural amphitheatre of the Winnats Pass, midway between the two cities, on 12 June 1926. Dr Ernest Baker was the principal speaker.[105] The Winnats Rally became an annual event, with the number of attendees increasing from a few hundred in 1926 to a reported peak of 8,000 in 1932, before declining in the years leading up the Second World War.

The failure of the government to grant parliamentary time for Trevelyan's Bill, and the rapidly growing popularity of country walking, underlined the need for a national body to represent walkers' interest and to lobby parliament. In response, a 'Ramblers' Parliament' was convened in Hope, Derbyshire, on 30 October 1927, with delegates from each of the four Ramblers' Federations, together with representatives from the Commons Society, the PD&NCFPS, and the newly formed CPRE.[106] It was this meeting that gave rise to the annual Countryside Conferences convened by the CPRE in subsequent years.[107] When it became clear that the leadership of the CPRE did not

[102] *Yorkshire Post*, 20 May 1924.
[103] *Country Life*, 31 May 1924, 844.
[104] *Observer* and *Daily Mail*, 13 May 1924; *The Times*, 14 May 1924.
[105] *SCRH* (1927-28), 181, and subsequent years.
[106] *M&DRFH* (1928), 12.
[107] See page 97.

support the Access to Mountains campaign, the Ramblers' Federations convened a second conference at Hope on 28 June 1930, to which the preservation societies were not invited. Bert Ward took the chair, Stephen Morton, Hon. Secretary of the Sheffield Federation, acted as secretary, and the conference passed a motion calling for the establishment of a Standing Council of Ramblers' Federations, as a first step towards the formation of a national organization. The following day, delegates attended the access rally in the Winnats Pass.

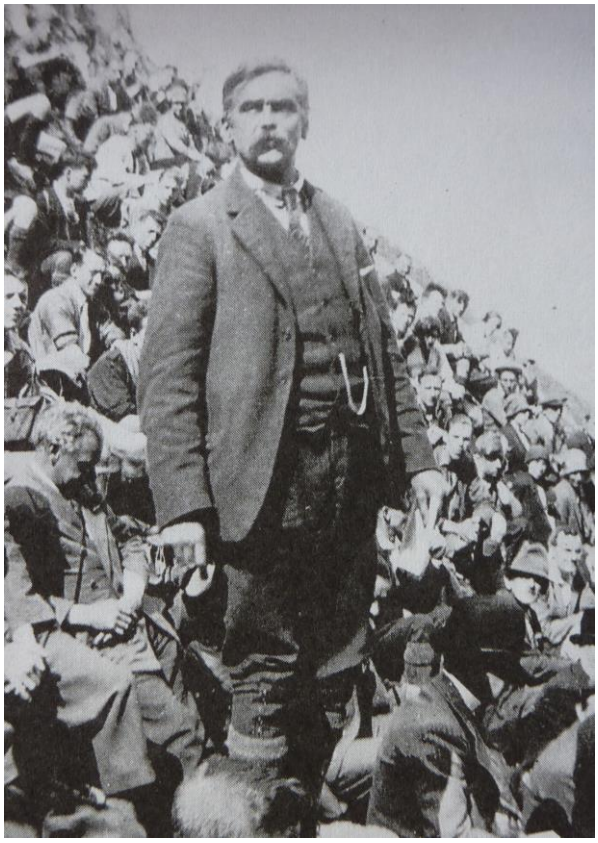

Illustration 11: Bert Ward addressing the Winnats Rally, 1928? (Tom Stephenson)

With the annual Countryside Conference effectively captured by the upper-middle-class preservation movement, the National Council of Ramblers' Federations, established in 1931, was intended to be the precursor for a national body representing the interests of the broader outdoor movement. However, from the outset, pronounced regional differences emerged within the organization. The inaugural meeting was held on the Longshaw Estate (where the Lodge had been converted into a CHA guest house). Arthur Leonard was unanimously elected chair and George Mitchell, Hon. Secretary of the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs and a member of the London CHA Club, was appointed secretary. The issue that had led to the schism between the preservation movement and the rambling movement was access to open country;

specifically access to the privately-owned grouse moors of the southern Pennines. However, members of clubs affiliated to the London Federation (which probably represented about 40 per cent of the total membership of the formal rambling movement at that time) rarely walked in the North, and when they did they tended to go to the Lake District, Snowdonia or Scotland, rather than the Pennines. As a result, they regarded access to the moorlands of the southern Pennines as just one of many pressing issues, and were equally concerned with preserving access to fields, meadows, woodland, heathland, rivers, lakes, the broads and the coastline. Access to the Thames tow path, which was becoming problematic because of riverside housing developments and the closure of pedestrian ferries, represented a similar 'local grievance' for London walkers.[108]

The interests of walkers in London and the South East were generally well served by the Commons Society, which was actively engaged in preserving the dense network of public footpaths in the Home Counties and elsewhere. In the post-War years, the *Ramblers' Handbooks* published by the London Federation continued to include reports on the activities of the Commons Society and the National Trust, and from 1927 onwards there was also coverage of the activities of the CPRE, including reports on the annual Countryside Conferences and the campaign for National Parks. The Pedestrians' Association (founded in 1929), which campaigned for the safety of pedestrians on the increasingly crowded roads, was also discussed, as was the 1932 Rights of Way Act, but the various Access to Mountains Bills received less coverage, because the topic was of limited interest to most ramblers in southern England.

For the leaders of the Manchester and Sheffield Federations, however, access to the 'Forbidden Land' in the Pennines had assumed huge symbolic significance. The rapid expansion of the movement in the North, coupled with a growing association between landscape and regional identity, gave rise to the belief that rambling was a distinctly northern activity; a view that was echoed in the northern regional press and continues to find expression in many popular and academic studies today. At the time, because of poor record-keeping, there was little readily available data to contradict this view. However, even the records of the Ramblers' Association suggest that the number of clubs affiliated to the formal rambling movement in the South and the Midlands outnumbered those in the North.[109] Given their belief in the essentially northern character of the movement, and their mistrust of the London Federation (because of

[108] See 'A Local or a General Grievance?', *OoD* Jan. 1929, 149, for the northern view.
[109] See page 145.

regional prejudices and its continuing ties to a preservation movement that had, in their eyes, betrayed the ramblers' cause), the leaders of the Manchester Federation were adamant that any national organization should be headquartered in the North. They maintained this view despite the fact that the primary purpose of the national organization was to lobby parliament and, as Mitchell observed, 'owing to circumstances over which present day ramblers have no control [London] happens to be the seat of Government for the present'.[110]

When it became clear that most members of the National Council of Ramblers' Federations (including Leonard) agreed with Mitchell that London was the rational location for the headquarters, Arthur Hewitt, representing the Manchester Federation, proposed that the National Council should be divided into a Union of Northern Ramblers' Federations, headquartered in Manchester, and a Union of Southern Federations, headquartered in London, because Manchester was 'the centre of rambling activities in the North'.[111] The motion was defeated, not least because of opposition from Sheffield, Liverpool and the newly-formed West Riding Federation. The schismatic tendencies within the rambling movement were not, however, confined to a North-South divide. The strong emotional attachment felt by many of the leaders to their local landscapes, and constant appeals to local chauvinism – 'let Lancashire be ahead of all the other parts of the country in Rambling as she is in everything else' – undermined their ability to work collaboratively, even on a regional scale, by exacerbating local rivalries between Lancashire and Yorkshire, Manchester and Liverpool, and Manchester and the smaller mill towns of north east Lancashire, who objected to the 'overbearing arrogance' of Mancunians.[112] As the Sheffield Federation observed in 1931, 'the greatest failing of the Federations has been their jealousy one towards the other. Each Committee has appeared to think they were the big noise in rambling, that they were the only people who knew how things should be done.'[113]

The world view of many of the leaders of the rambling movement was profoundly parochial, and their ability to negotiate or compromise was constrained by a dogmatic belief in the righteousness of their cause. When Lawrence Chubb suggested that a negotiated settlement with the owners of the Peak District grouse moors was inevitable, Edwin Royce retorted that 'compromise is a hateful thing to many of us and

[110] Letter from Mitchell to Leonard (undated, c1931), RAA 449.
[111] NCRF minutes, 26/27 Sep. 1931, 02/449.
[112] *B&MLRF Bulletin*, Apr.1933. E.g. Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 107: 'A fine piece of Manchester…arrogance [to] regard the Lake District as an outer suburb of the City'.
[113] *H&C*, Sep. 1931, 39.

to some will smack of treachery'.[114] The objectives of the National Council included: 'To promote…co-operation of other organisations and individuals on matters of common interest.' The choice of the word 'of', rather than 'with', is suggestive. Royce recognised that 'the scandal of the Peak District would not have been allowed for half-a-century in the neighbourhood of London, or even the Lakes', but apparently failed to recognise that the success of the Commons Society in protecting access to open spaces in the South East, the Lake District, and elsewhere had largely been achieved through negotiation with the landowners, and by forming a strong coalition with the broader preservation movement.

Howkins and Lowerson dismissed rambling in the south of England during the interwar years as 'a gentle extension of the suburbanites' rural dreams', while claiming that walking in the North was 'a crusade, driven by a fiercely co-operative spirit'.[115] In reality, however, a co-operative spirit was far more evident in the South, where the London Federation continued to represent ramblers across the whole of the South East of England, while the North splintered into ever smaller Federations. By 1933 there were four 'regional' Federations in Lancashire alone. As the *Daily Herald* observed in 1932: 'There is more nonsense talked about the brotherhood of the open air than on any other subject.'[116]

The effectiveness of the National Council of Ramblers' Federations as a campaigning organization was also undermined by a severe lack of money. In 1932, when the CPRE commanded a budget of some £3,500 per year, the total subscriptions paid to the National Council by its constituent Federations amounted to less than £12.[117] They also had difficulty in recruiting volunteers. Meetings of the regional Federations and the National Council (dutifully recorded in magazines such as *Out o' Doors*), resembled a trades union congress, with lists of 'associates', 'delegates' and 'officials', speeches made and motions carried. There were border disputes between rival Federations in Lancashire ('satisfactorily resolved with the exception of Chorley') and constant complaints that 'ramblers as a whole are not contributing enough to maintain their parent organisation'.[118]

[114] *M&DRFH* (1938), 170.
[115] Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 50.
[116] *Daily Herald*, 16 Apr.1932.
[117] NCRF ExCo minutes 10/11 Feb. 1934 noted that subscriptions from eight Federations were overdue. As a result, the Council was reliant upon donations from the CHA and the HF.
[118] *OoD*, 'M&DRF Notes' Oct. 1931, 51, 82; 'Federation of Rambling Clubs Notes', July 1931, 188. *B&MLRF Bulletin*, 3, 3, Sep. 1933.

Photographs of National Council meetings in the Ramblers' Association Archives show groups of middle-aged men and, more rarely, two (unmarried) women, one of whom was Nora Willington, secretary of the Manchester Federation. In 1930, she wrote a wistful letter to Mitchell: 'How enthusiastic we were in our love of the open air with its attendant pioneer spirit when the rambling movement first got a real hold after the War.'[119] As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, many young hikers were inspired by that same enthusiasm and pioneering spirit, but they had little interest in attending lengthy and largely unproductive committee meetings. As Leslie Paul (born 1905) observed:

> Why should they be burdened with constitutions and subscriptions when all that was necessary was to sling your rucsac on your back on Saturday and, with the boys and girls who were your comrades, make tracks for the countryside?[120]

While many of the pre-War generation of ramblers who served on the Federations' committees continued to regard rambling as a cause – a quest for self-improvement and social justice – most of the post-War generation regarded a walk in the country as an adventurous, sociable leisure activity.

The leadership of the Ramblers' Federations was further called into question when Benny Rothman, a 20-year-old, unemployed, Jewish motor mechanic from Manchester, with no affiliation to the formal rambling movement, led a spontaneous 'mass trespass' on Kinder Scout in 1932.[121] Following the incident, an editorial in *Out-o'-Doors* noted that some younger walkers 'claimed that the leaders of the ramblers' movement have descended to the apathy of old age'.[122] The National Council of Ramblers' Federations, which had been established for two years, was still laboriously trying to negotiate a constitution that was acceptable to all the northern Federations. Apart from organising a few local rallies in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire, it had done little to progress the campaign for access and had not held a single meeting with government or with the landowners' associations. All the meetings of the Council took place in the North (probably because of the disproportionate cost of transporting representatives of the ever-increasing number of northern Federations to London) and the only contact with other campaigning organizations, such as the CPRE and the Commons Society, was through Mitchell and Southern, from the London Federation.

[119] Letter 13 Aug.1930 (RA 02/134).
[120] Paul, *Angry Young Man*, 60. See page 200.
[121] See page 187.
[122] *OoD*, July 1932, 126.

Two months after the Kinder trespass, the Sheffield Federation noted the presence of hecklers at the annual Winnats rally: 'Ramblers are becoming restive. This was noticeable at the meeting and responsible for a number of interruptions.' The Federation observed that 'waiting for the successful passage of [the 1932 Rights of Way] Bill through two Houses of Parliament does not appeal to young minds', but interestingly, they also sought to downplay the significance of the access restrictions on the grouse moors of the Peak District: 'Apart from the nesting season, the opposition to ramblers crossing the moorlands is not so great, and provided the rambler acts reasonably he has nothing to fear when doing so.'[123]

In public, Morton dismissed the significance of the Kinder trespass, but at the next meeting of the National Council he used the incident to press for greater activism, asking 'whether the young fellows who had been demonstrating were not doing more good than the Federations'.[124] In response, the Council resolved to step up its campaign for the Access to Mountains and, on 30 January 1933, representatives travelled to London to attend a meeting with landowners' organizations, arranged for them by the Commons Society. Colonel Sir George Courthope, MP and Major Fitzherbert-Brockholes represented the Country Landowners' Association, while Walter Bourke, the Earl of Mayo, represented the Land Agents' Society. The Commons Society was represented by Sir Edgar Bonham Carter (who chaired the meeting) and Sir Lawrence Chubb (who acted as secretary), with Colonel Buxton, from the National Trust, in attendance. The National Council of Ramblers was represented by Leonard; Royce and Hewitt from Manchester; Ward from Sheffield; and Southern from London. The minutes record that all parties agreed that access negotiations were best handled at a local level, and that they might meet again if all agreed that it was desirable. They also agreed that no statements would be made to the press.[125] Following the meeting, the Council, represented mainly by Ward, endeavoured to negotiate a permissive footpath across the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth Estate on the eastern side of the Peak District. The negotiations failed.

Meanwhile, efforts to draw up a constitution, or even to compile a consolidated list of affiliated clubs, dragged on. After four years of negotiations a draft constitution was finally agreed at the National Council meeting on 30 September 1934 and Morton proposed that the new national organization should be called the Ramblers'

[123] Sheffield Federation Notes, *H&C*, Aug.1932, 361.
[124] E.g. see page 197; NCRF minutes 1 & 2 Oct.1932.
[125] RAA 02/418.

Association.[126] However, Hewitt refused to sign on behalf of the Manchester Federation, a decision that was subsequently ratified at the Federation's Annual General Meeting. Royce condemned the move, claiming that it was based on 'unreasoning prejudice', but also found himself ineligible to serve on the new national Executive Committee (since he had been elected as a representative of the Manchester Federation) until he was hastily appointed vice president.[127] Despite the refusal of Manchester to join the national organization, the Sheffield Federation insisted that it be placed on record that 'the Access to Mountains Bill be the main concern of the Association'.[128]

Table 3: Federations and Clubs Affiliated to the Ramblers' Association in 1937

Federations	Individual Members	Affiliated Clubs	Subscription Paid to RA	Date of Formation
Southern (London)	435	130	£17	1905
Manchester		37		1922
Liverpool	313	29	£9	1923
Sheffield	143		£4	1926
West Riding	104	25	£4	1930
Midland (Birmingham)	75	19	£2	1930
Leicester	74	12	£2	
South Wales	70	9	£2	1933
Cumberland & Lakes	69	8	£2	1932
West of England (Bristol)	12	6	£1	1932
Notts	12	6	£1	1930
N. E. Lancs	20	6	£1	1930
Derbyshire	10	5	£1	
Totals	1,337	292	£46	

Source: RAA. The London Federation was renamed the Southern Federation. Data for the Glasgow and West of Scotland, Edinburgh and Fife, and Aberdeen Federations is missing. When the RA was formed in 1935, there were also Federations in Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Bolton & Mid Lancs, and Northern (Tyneside), but these had apparently ceased to function before 1937. An East Riding Federation was established in 1937. The number of clubs affiliated to the Manchester Federation appears to be a significant under-estimate. The number of affiliated clubs in Sheffield was not included, but the subscription payable to the RA suggests between 20 and 28 clubs.

At the time of its formation, Mitchell, the first Hon. Secretary, estimated that the Ramblers' Association had 153 affiliated clubs in the North and 175 clubs in the

[126] NCRF meeting, 30 Sep. 1934 01/001.
[127] *M&DRFH* (1936), 14.
[128] Annual Meeting RA, 14/15 Mar. 1936, 01/001.

Southern and Central regions.[129] However, because of poor record-keeping, these were rough estimates and the regional Federations had an incentive to under-report because the number of affiliated clubs determined the subscription paid to the Ramblers' Association. In 1937, Mitchell produced consolidated figures for the Ramblers' Association (including the independent Manchester & District Federation) but, once again, much of the data appears to be estimated (see Table 3). None of the Federations recorded the membership of individual affiliated clubs, but the 'rule of thumb' adopted by the Ramblers' Association was 100 members per club. On this basis, the total membership of rambling clubs affiliated to the Ramblers' Association (i.e. excluding Manchester) was around 28,000. Ironically, by the time that the Ramblers' Association was finally formed, the number of clubs affiliated to the formal rambling movement was in rapid decline. In 1936, for example, the Manchester Federation noted that 'the decline in clubs has been rather remarkable. It is not merely that they have failed to affiliate, but that clubs have disbanded or become defunct.'[130]

One of the first acts of the newly formed Ramblers' Association was to form an Access to Mountains Committee, with Royce appointed as convener. The Committee met once in 1936 and twice in 1937, but the public profile of their campaign was so low that when the BBC broadcast a debate on access in 1937, entitled 'Should Trespassers be Prosecuted?', they selected a 'representative rambler' without consulting the Ramblers' Association. In 1938, a monetary donation from the YHA and the offer of office space in their Merseyside regional office enabled the Ramblers' Association to install Tom Fairclough as their first Organising Secretary. Fairclough was a member of the HF, a close friend of Leonard, one of the founders of the YHA, and an active committee member of the Liverpool Federation. Nevertheless, because of the continuing lack of contact with government departments, MPs, or the London-based CPRE or Commons Society, when an Access to Mountains Bill introduced by Arthur Creech Jones on 11 November 1938 was unexpectedly granted a second reading, the Ramblers' Association was totally unprepared (notwithstanding its brave claim that 'the steady work of the Access to Mountains Sub-Committee had suddenly achieved an unexpected measure of success').[131] Creech Jones, the Labour MP for Shipley, was a former organising secretary for the Workers' Travel Association and an early supporter of the YHA. During the second reading, on 2 December 1938, his Bill was given

[129] *M&DRFH* (1936),16.
[130] *M&DRFH* (1936), 8.
[131] ExCo Report 1938, 01/002.

unanimous approval by the House of Commons provided he accommodated the 'reasonable demands' of landowners during the committee stage.[132]

Chubb's opposition to unfettered access to the grouse moors of Derbyshire was well-known in rambling circles, yet he was effectively deputed to be the sole representative of the interests of ramblers at the negotiations because, as the Ramblers' Association freely admitted, 'representatives of the Ramblers' Federations have never met in conference the representatives of the landowners'.[133] Pat Rickwood argues that the Ramblers' Association was dilatory in responding to the draft amendments that were sent to them for comment by Chubb, and did not agree a common negotiating position until it was too late. In contrast, the government was subjected to far more professional lobbying by landowners' associations and their allies in the civil service, many of whom were opposed to the private member's Bill. Consequently, parliamentary supporters of the access campaign were outnumbered and outmanoeuvred. As the *News Chronicle* noted: 'The skill with which the British governing class maintains its privileges was shown in the Commons yesterday, when a Bill giving freer access to moor and mountain was turned into a Bill which will, in fact, seriously limit such access.'[134]

The original language of the Creech Jones Bill differed little from James Bryce's 1884 Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill, in contemplating unfettered access to all uncultivated land. Bryce's Bill was an idealistic proposition even in late nineteenth-century Scotland, when walkers and climbers were rare. By the late 1930s, with the vast expansion of the outdoor movement, such a measure was never likely to succeed. The government proposed that the presumption in favour of access be reversed, and an administrative process established through which interested parties might apply for access over designated areas of open country. However, the landowners' lobby went much further, introducing a provision making trespass a criminal (as opposed to a civil) offence for the first time, as well as a number of other offences that carried fines. Belatedly, the Ramblers' Association started to lobby members of parliament to reject these amendments. Just three days before the third reading of the Bill, on 18 April 1939, Morton wrote to Clement Attlee stating that the Association would prefer no Access to Mountains Bill, rather than accept the amendment making trespass a

[132] Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', ch. 10 provides a detailed account of the negotiations that took place during the committee stage. Also P.W. Rickwood, 'The Access Campaigns - Then and Now', *Rucksack,* 5, 6 (1976).

[133] For Chubb's views, see *Rambling*, Mar. 1935, 6. RA memo (1938) quoted in Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 82 (I have been unable to trace this document).

[134] 22 Apr.1939.

criminal offence.[135] However, the third reading of the Bill, including the measures proposed by the landowners, took place without a division on 21 April. Even newspapers sympathetic to the access campaign were unaware of the Association's opposition to the Bill. The *Daily Herald*, for example, described the 'Walkers' Bill' as 'eminently worth having'.[136] The minutes of the Executive Committee of the Ramblers' Association record that they finally took the formal decision to oppose the Bill on 6/7 May, by which time it had already passed to the House of Lords. After a few minor amendments, the Bill became law on 13 July 1939.

Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of ramblers and hikers remained completely indifferent to events unfolding in parliament. In a rare example of activism, the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs hired and filled 50 buses for a demonstration at Leith Hill in Surrey, which was addressed by Lewis Silkin MP.[137] But according to the *Manchester Guardian*, fewer than one thousand ramblers attended the annual access rally in the Winnats Pass on 25 June 1939, where Noel-Baker, Labour MP for Derby and a member of the parliamentary Amenities Group, and Stephen Morton debated the Bill's merits.[138] The leaders of the northern Ramblers' Federations, including Tom Stephenson, sought to lay the blame for 'The Great Betrayal' on Chubb and the preservation movement.[139] However, Rickwood's account suggests that Chubb kept all of the Open-Air Organisations informed of the amendments proposed by both the landowners' associations and the government, and that he faithfully represented the strength of local feeling in the Manchester and Sheffield Federations.[140] John Sheail points out that it was the government's duty to balance the competing claims of public access and private property. As a Home Office official observed at the time, far from being a straightforward matter, this was 'one of the most difficult and keenly controversial problems that can arise', and it was only Chubb's perseverance in seeking to negotiate an agreement between the landowners' bodies and the rambling movement that enabled the Creech Jones' Bill to obtain a second reading

[135] RAA 4287/02/008/2.
[136] *Daily Herald*, 21 Apr.1939.
[137] T. Stephenson, 'Historical Notes', in *Profile of the Ramblers' Association Southern Area* (1975).
[138] 'Ramblers and Access to Mountains Bill: Two Views of the Compromise', *Manchester Guardian*, 26 June 1939.
[139] T. Stephenson, 'The Great Betrayal: The Access to Mountains Act 1939', *Rucksack,* 10, 3 (1981); Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 195.
[140] Hill, *Freedom to Roam* 78-82 contests this, accusing Chubb of deliberately misleading the RA.

unopposed.[141] Sheail concludes that, far from being a betrayal, the 1939 Act was a remarkable achievement for a private member's bill with no backing from the government. However, the onerous and costly administrative arrangements to apply for access, coupled with the criminalisation of trespass over areas where access had not been formally granted, dramatically increased the potential penalties faced by the many ramblers and hikers who routinely trespassed on uncultivated land.

In its final annual report before the Second World War curtailed most of its activities, the Ramblers' Association lamented that 'many individual ramblers are still not aware of the privilege and duty of membership'.[142] Finally recognising the need for concerted action, the Manchester Federation applied for admission to the Ramblers' Association in 1939, but divisions within the movement continued during the Second World War.[143] Creech Jones wrote to Mitchell on 20 September 1943 urging the Association to at least attempt to use the 1939 Act, if only to demonstrate the unworkability of the regulations: 'I do most ardently want the [access] cause to succeed even if a few may have their doubts after the bitter and unfriendly attacks on my mental and moral integrity in 1939 made by a few comrades in the associated clubs.'[144] Royce and Ward supported working within the existing measures, with a view to securing some immediate gains, while demonstrating the need for improved legislation later. They were opposed by Morton and Stephenson, recently elected to the Executive Committee, who argued that the Act should be ignored and a vigorous campaign launched to replace it when the war came to an end.[145] As Chapter 7 will show, Morton and Stephenson won the argument.

* * *

The pre-War rambling movement was highly variegated, with clubs affiliated to scientific, educational, religious and political institutions. Outside Scotland, purely social clubs, open to members who did not share some other form of affiliation, were relatively rare. Many of the founders of these clubs – whether middle-class religious leaders and social reformers, or working-class autodidacts – sought to improve their members' lives by providing them with 'rational' recreation as an improving alternative to commercial leisure. However, there was always a tension between the improving

[141] Quoted in J. Sheail, 'The Access to Mountains Act 1939', *RH* 21, 1 (2010), 72. G. Cherry, *Environmental Planning Vol II: National Parks and Recreation in the Countryside* (London: 1975), 18.
[142] RA AR 31 Dec.1939, 01/002.
[143] Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, ch.9.
[144] RAA 4287/02/008/2.
[145] RA ExCo, 28/29 Aug.1943.

aspirations of the leadership and the social and recreational interests of many of the members. Over time, as clubs loosened their ties to the founding individual or institution, many assumed a more social character, with the relatively free intermingling of the sexes being a particular attraction.

Numerous clubs failed to revive after the War, and the new rambling clubs that started to emerge, after a post-War lull, in the mid-1920s tended to be open to all outdoor enthusiasts, with no pretentions to serving a higher intellectual, spiritual or political purpose. However, the pre-War enthusiasts who assumed positions of leadership within the formal rambling movement in the interwar years, and who were responsible for producing nearly all the written records its activities, continued to regard rambling as a cause.

In their attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside, the leaders of the formal rambling movement stood in an intermediate position between the pre-War, upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering tradition and the post-War hikers. Many shared with the pre-War trampers an aesthetic, almost pantheistic, love of the country, but their social instincts were more egalitarian and inclusive. The main distinction between the leaders of the rambling movement and hikers was that the former aspired to be 'informed' citizens, with a knowledge of local history and natural sciences, and continued to regard walking as an activity that contributed to the improvement of the individual and the development of a just society. In contrast, as Chapter 5 will show, most hikers regarded walking as an energetic, companionable, leisure activity; not a solemn duty.

By revealing for the first time, to its largely upper-working- and lower-middle-class urban membership, the beauty and exceptionalism of the landscapes surrounding their home towns and cities, the rambling movement contributed to the development of 'local patriotism' – an 'imagined community' of outdoor enthusiasts with a shared passion for a particular landscape.[146] Among the leaders of the rambling movement in Manchester and Sheffield, in particular, a growing awareness of the local landscape and local history, coupled with a belief in the moral mission of the rambling movement to improve the lives of ordinary men and women, coalesced around the single issue of gaining access to the privately-owned grouse moors of the southern Pennines.

Unlike the upper-middle-class tramping tradition, which idealised individualism (even though their clubs were highly sociable in character), the rambling strand of the movement idealised outdoor fellowship and co-operation. But ironically, the

[146] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983). Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside,* 71-74.

individualistic trampers and preservationists were far more effective at mobilising collective action in pursuit of their interests, while the rambling movement was riven by regional factionalism. The northern Federations failed to mobilise popular support in pursuit of their objectives, partly because of the generational and attitudinal gap that existed between the leaders of the movement and the majority of participants, and partly because they made almost no attempt to lobby government or to ally themselves with the better-funded and better-organized preservation movement, because of class and regional prejudices on both sides. McKibbin ascribes the fall of the Labour government in 1931 to the failure of politicians who 'found it difficult to cope with the political and social elites as equals or with confidence'. He noted that it 'represented the failure of the autodidact tradition in British politics' and 'exposed the limitations…of the socialism of fellowship and ethical improvement'.[147] The same could be said of the access campaign conducted by the northern Ramblers' Federations during the interwar years.

The formal, collaborative rambling movement certainly expanded during the interwar years, but there is little evidence to support Taylor's assertion that the campaign for access was the motivating force behind this expansion, and the demographics of the movement suggest that it was neither large enough, nor young enough, to account for the dramatic growth in the number of young people walking in the countryside in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

[147] R. McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford, 2010), 83-84.

Chapter 5

Hikers

Illustration 12: 'Hikers enjoying the sunshine at Box Hill', 9 April 1935 (*Daily Herald*).

The previous two chapters have examined all the major adult social institutions associated with the outdoor movement that existed before 1930. None of them can account for how the idea of strenuous country walking so suddenly came to captivate so many young people during the interwar years. At the peak of the hiking craze, the senior clubs, which formed the core of the upper-middle-class tramping and mountaineering strand of the outdoor movement, consisted of perhaps 3,000 people, many of whom were old and relatively inactive. The preservation movement was equally small and elite. Membership of the National Trust, the largest preservation society, increased from 713 in 1920 to 6,800 in 1939, but it was not until well after the Second World War that it started to become a mass-membership organization. In 1936, the Ramblers' Federations claimed to represent 40,000 walkers. Data collected by the Ramblers' Association one year later estimated the membership of affiliated clubs to be some 28,000.[1] At its peak, in 1932, the access campaign reportedly attracted 8,000 people to its best attended rally in the North of England and perhaps

[1] RA AR (1936) and (1937).

1,000 in the South (many of whom were probably also members of rambling clubs).[2] Membership of the CHA rose from 17,486 in 1920 to 31,071 in 1938, while membership of the HF increased from 6,398 to 45,169 over the same period.[3] However, many of these were also members of CHA or HF rambling clubs, affiliated to the Ramblers' Association. Excluding double-counting, the total number of recreational walkers represented by all of these institutions in the 1930s was almost certainly less than 100,000.

Estimates of the total strength of the outdoor movement in the interwar years vary widely. The only reliable national data comes from the YHA and the SYHA, which were created in 1930 and 1931 to provide cheap overnight accommodation for young walkers and cyclists. Membership of the two Associations increased from zero to 107,000 in eight years.[4] At the height of the hiking craze in 1931, Chubb estimated that there were 500,000 independent walkers, not affiliated to any club; while John Walsh, editor of *Hiker and Camper*, put the number at 800,000, of whom 250,000 were 'real hikers' (by which he probably meant people who went on multi-day walks).[5] The *Manchester Guardian* claimed that there were 'more than a million ramblers' in 1931; while 'Vagabond', writing in *The Sunday Sun* two years later, claimed three million.[6] In 1935, Tom Stephenson maintained that there were 50,000 members of organized clubs and a further 500,000 independent walkers.[7]

To put these numbers in context, in 1939 there were 43,000 clubs affiliated to the Football Association (representing well over 500,000 individual members); 300,000 members of clubs affiliated to the Amateur Athletics Association; over 160,000 netball players; and over 160,000 members of the Women's League of Health and Beauty, a physical fitness movement founded in 1930.[8] If the median estimate of 500,000 independent walkers is roughly correct – which seems entirely plausible given the

[2] Press estimates of the attendance at the Winnats and Leigh Hill rallies in 1932. See Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 74; Shoard, *A Right to Roam*, 182. Photographs of the event suggest that the actual attendance was lower (see WCMA, Bill Keen photographs). Oral accounts also suggest that many of the 'ramblers' were cyclists: 'There were as many bikes on t'grass as rucksacks', according to 'John' (born 1918), *Moor Memories*, SLSL Oral History Project, CD187.

[3] CHA and HF AR; Jones, *Workers at Play*, 64.

[4] YHA and SYHA AR.

[5] *Daily Herald*, 1 May 1931; J. E. Walsh, *On the Hike: Being Notes By the Wayside on the Greatest Movement of Modern Times* (1932), 24. Walsh sometimes used the term 'hike' (as Scouts did) to denote a multi-day walking and camping trip.

[6] *Manchester Guardian,* 21 Feb. 1931; 'The Call of the Open Road', *Sunday Sun*, 9 Apr.1933. Neither indicated how they arrived at their estimates.

[7] T. Stephenson, 'Walking to Prosperity', *The Passing Show*, 19 May, 1934, 14-15. See also Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', 186-89.

[8] National Fitness Council, *The National Fitness Campaign* (1939), 10.

extensive media coverage of walking, the dramatic increase in advertising for related goods and services, and the expansion of rail services to country areas on Sundays – it implies that less than 20 per cent of participants in the mass outdoor movement were members of clubs or associations that existed before 1930. Furthermore, since all these estimates appear to be snapshots in time, it suggests that the total number of young people who went hiking during the 15-year period from the mid-1920s to the outbreak of the Second World War may well have run to several millions.

Previous histories of the outdoor movement have emphasised continuity between the pre- and post-War period, but the dramatic expansion of the movement in the late 1920s, coupled with the fact that most walkers did not join existing institutions, suggests that, far from following an established tradition, they were creating a new one. This chapter therefore endeavours to answer two questions: What triggered the dramatic expansion of the outdoor movement in the late 1920s? And who were the participants? It seeks to establish the sequence of events that led up to the hiking craze and the emergence of the mass outdoor movement, assesses whether existing neo-romantic or ideological explanations adequately account for its origins, and proposes an alternative explanation that reinterprets the mass outdoor movement as a youth movement.

The Origins of the 'Hiking Craze'

What caused the hiking craze? Many contemporary commentators thought that they knew the answer to this question. In 1931, the *Sheffield Telegraph* declared that 'a new democracy of youth is in the making…The boy scout and girl guide of to-day are the potential, almost certain, ramblers of tomorrow.'[9] In *The Complete Hiker and Camper* (1931), C. F. Carr stated that the increasing popularity of outdoor activities had arisen because of the 'wonderful pioneer work in this direction of the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements'.[10] In 1932, Claude Fisher, the hiking correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, wrote that 'the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides…are largely responsible for the present enthusiasm for the outdoors'.[11] The Manchester Ramblers' Federation agreed that 'Baden-Powell's Boy Scout movement is also one of the unconscious and growing influences behind this latest love of outdoors'.[12] Even Bert Ward, founder of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, held the Scouts responsible for the hiking craze, although he was less enamoured of the results: 'The juveniles and town larrikins who are

[9] 'A Welcome Break', *Sheffield Telegraph*, 6 Apr.1931.
[10] Carr, *Complete Hiker and Camper*, 3.
[11] Fisher, *Hikecraft,*19.
[12] *M&DRFH* (1932), 25.

coming out by 'bus and cheap trip…giving trouble to farmers and 'keepers…are chiefly the hangers-on and unregulated imitators of the Boy Scouts.'[13]

The connection between the rapid expansion during the interwar years of the Boy Scouts (founded in 1906) and Girl Guides (1910) and the emergence of the mass outdoor movement has largely been overlooked by its historians. Walker refers briefly to the Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigade in relation to the development of holiday camps and the Woodcraft movement, but does not attempt to establish a link between the Boy Scout movement and the hiking craze.[14] Taylor's *History of the British Outdoor Movement* makes no reference to Scouts or Guides.[15] Yet, between the wars the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were by far the largest outdoor organizations with a combined membership of 743,000 in 1940.[16] According to Mass Observation, 34 per cent of males born between 1901 and 1920 (precisely the age group from which most participants in the mass outdoor movement were drawn) had been a member of the Scouts.[17]

Scouts were also early adopters of the word 'hiking'. In the preface to a 1927 book entitled *Hiking* (possibly the first use of the word in a British book title), J. S. Wilson noted that 'hiking as such is now an accepted part of Scout Training, and this book should be very helpful to older Scouts and to Rover Scouts so that they can set about it in the proper manner'. The author, D. F. Morgan, even claimed (incorrectly) the credit for reintroducing 'the old English word hiking…revived here now by Scouts'.[18]

While much has been written about the aspirations of the adult leaders of the various uniformed youth movements that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, relatively little is known about the youths themselves. John Springhall, who pioneered the study of youth movements in Britain, defined a 'youth movement' as one that is established with the aim of propagating some sort of code of living, encourages the participation of its youthful members as leaders and organizers, allows competition for awards and badges, and provides a distinct identity and status in the form of a uniform.[19] The central idea behind this definition is that 'youth movements' were

[13] *SCRH* (1930-31), 174.
[14] Walker, 'The Outdoor Movement', ch.8.
[15] Subtitle of Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*.
[16] Halsey, ed., *Trends in British Society*, 334.
[17] Mass Observation survey 1966 quoted in P. Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements 1908-30', *JCH* 4, 2 (1969), 3.
[18] Morgan, *Hiking*, vii. The word was frequently used in *Open Road* from 1923 onwards (e.g. May 1923, 22).
[19] J. Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements 1883-1940* (1977), 13; J. Springhall, *Sure and Steadfast: The History of the Boys' Brigade 1883-1983* (1983); J.

designed and led by adults 'to penetrate and organize the leisure of…adolescents' in order to pursue a specific social objective.[20] Most of the subsequent academic literature has focused on the theoretical objectives of the adult leaders, rather than practical outcomes for the youths, as Michael Rosenthal made explicit in his study: 'I have not felt it useful…to include the personal experiences of individual Scouts, however fascinating they might be…It is primarily the theory and ideology behind the movement that interest me.'[21]

Springhall claims that the main objectives of the Boy Scouts were 'to prepare the next generation of British soldiers for war and the defence of the Empire' and to 'smooth the way for upper-working-class and lower-middle-class assimilation into the urban industrial order of British society'.[22] Jeffrey Hantover argues that adult scoutmasters sought to validate traditional images of masculinity denied to them by their occupations, which were typically 'feminized' white collar, office jobs.[23] Allen Warren emphasises the making of good citizens; while Trentmann focuses on eugenics and the fight against racial degeneration.[24] Tammy Proctor is one of the few academics to address the actual experience of Scouts themselves, arguing that earlier studies misrepresent the ideology and social composition of the movement as a result of over-reliance on the stated intentions of adult leaders, most of whom came from middle-class backgrounds. Proctor maintains that a reduced emphasis on militarism, and the rapid expansion of the Scout movement after the War, transformed it from a tightly controlled middle-class movement into a diverse and diffuse association that promoted social mobility.[25] Meanwhile, Peter Clarke notes that the Scout movement 'flourished…because it was a passport to accessible outdoor adventures'.[26] The annual camp was the highlight of the Scout and Guide calendar and for many young

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Springhall, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?', *English Historical Review* 102, 405 (1987), 934-42; and Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements'.

[20] Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 13, 15. In this thesis, movements that fall within Springhall's definition are referred to as 'adult-led youth movements'.

[21] M. Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (1986), 14.

[22] Springhall, 'Baden-Powell', 935; Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 121.

[23] Based on research in the USA. J. P. Hantover, 'The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity', *Journal of Social Issues* 34, 1 (1978), 184-95. Rosenthal, *Character Factory*.

[24] A. Warren, 'Sport, Youth and Gender '; Trentmann, 'Review of "A Claim on the Countryside"'. See also Searle, 'Eugenics and Politics'.

[25] T. M. Proctor, '(Uni)forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts 1908-39'. *History Workshop Journal* 45 (1998), 103-34; T. M. Proctor, 'On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 92, 2 (2002), 161-80.

[26] P. Clarke, *Hope and Glory*, 1997 Penguin ed., 50 (first pubd.1996). See also Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*, 134.

town-dwellers it was a formative experience; the first time that they had spent a week in the country, away from their parents.[27]

Whatever the theoretical objectives of the leaders, the training that Scouts and Guides received in leadership and self-organization could clearly be subverted towards the pursuit of other objectives. Leslie Paul (born 1905), former Boy Scout and founder of the Woodcraft Folk, observed that, unlike other early twentieth-century social institutions dealing with children and juveniles, the Boy Scouts was an empowering and liberating organization that 'took the side of the natural, inquisitive, adventuring boy against the repressive schoolmaster, the moralizing parson and the coddling parent'.[28] The title of his autobiography *Angry Young Man* (1951) was later adopted as the label for a whole genre of work by rebellious young novelists and playwrights in the 1950s. Baden-Powell also recognised and even (in unguarded moments) celebrated the potential for youthful rebellion, claiming that acts of delinquency demonstrated that 'there was still some spirit of adventure among those juveniles'.[29]

The Scout and Guide movement typically lost members soon after they left school, at 14 or 15. An attempt immediately after the War to introduce a new category of 'Rover Scout' for older members largely failed.[30] The *Open Road* magazine, first published in February 1923, was specifically targeted at such older Scouts, who still enjoyed camping and the open air life, but who were less enthusiastic about scouting. It included articles on hiking (seven years before the term was in common usage) and camping and sought to address what the movement had to offer after a Scout had become a Patrol Leader and a King's Scout at the age of 15 or 16. The main suggestion put forward by the (presumably adult) editor was that older scouts should mentor younger ones. For many Scouts (and Guides), on the threshold of adulthood, this was probably not a particularly appealing proposition.

Springhall speculated that the inability of the Scouts to retain members beyond 15 was directly related to the emergence of hiking as a popular leisure activity, but did not pursue this insight.[31] Various contemporary academics and social reformers also commented on the absence of adult-organized leisure for older youths. In 1940, for

[27] E.g. J. R. Gillis, 'Conformity and Rebellion: Contrasting Styles of English and German Youth 1900-33', *History of Education Quarterly* 13, 3 (1973). However, Chris Spackman argues that outdoor activities were not the prime motivation for joining the Boys Brigade (PhD under preparation, Portsmouth University).

[28] L. Paul, *Angry Young Man* (1951), 54. See page 200.

[29] *The Times*, 25 May 1933, quoted in Pearson, *Hooligan,* 34. See also T. Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (1989), 416.

[30] Fowler, *First Teenagers,*142.

[31] Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*, 63-64.

example, James and Moore observed that most youth clubs (including Scouts, Guides and the various Brigades) were single sex, and argued that 'clubs which sponsored mixed activities in a sympathetic and resolute way would attract adolescents…If the existing clubs are unable or unwilling to undertake such new ventures, there is perhaps room for a new kind.'[32] In the *Second Social Survey of York* (1941), Rowntree made a similar plea, calling 'for some movement which will do for adolescents between 14 and 20 what the scout and guide movements do for younger people'.[33] In reality, such a movement, catering to the needs of youths of both sexes, already existed, but it was not recognised by James, Moore and Rowntree because it was not organized and led by adults. It was the mass outdoor movement.

The adult-led youth movements that were established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (of which the Boy Scouts was by far the most successful) created both the demand for the freedom, adventure and companionship of the outdoors, and the basic training that enabled urban youths from upper-working- and lower-middle-class family backgrounds to strike out on their own. In *The Needs of Youth* (1939), Dr A. E. Morgan argued that, in contrast to the Boys Brigades, the creation of a youth-led outdoor movement was almost a deliberate policy of the Scouts: 'The Brigades do not encourage individual camping: they lay stress on the value of the large well-ordered camp. A Scout is a group camper, but as soon as he is qualified he is encouraged to seek camping adventure in twos and threes.'[34] The evidence for former Scouts and Guides initiating the hiking craze is mainly circumstantial – there are relatively few accounts by hikers that specifically refer to their previous experience as Scouts or Guides – but it is nevertheless convincing. Importantly, while Scout leaders may have inspired and encouraged many future participants in the mass outdoor movement, it was the youths themselves who gave the movement its unique character and identity, and once the 'craze' gathered momentum, it drew in participants from a broader social base.

The Demography of the Mass Outdoor Movement

As discussed in Chapter 1, the major challenge confronting researchers into the interwar mass outdoor movement is to determine the demography and values of the hiking movement, since most hikers were not affiliated to any formal club or association, and few recorded their thoughts and deeds (which is perhaps why the phenomenon has been neglected by historians). Some young hikers (as defined in this

[32] James and Moore, 'Adolescent Leisure in a Working Class District', 145.
[33] Rowntree, *Second Social Survey of York*, 394.
[34] A. E. Morgan, *The Needs of Youth* (Oxford, 1939), 310.

thesis) joined clubs that were affiliated to the Ramblers' Federations. As a result, the number of affiliated clubs expanded rapidly during the interwar years. However, there was a significant generational and attitudinal gap between the mainly middle-aged leadership of the Ramblers' Federations, and the young hikers who, in some cases, created their own distinctive youthful sub-culture within formal, adult-led, rambling clubs.[35] Moreover, as discussed above, 'hikers' who were members of formal rambling clubs were a small minority. This chapter is therefore primarily concerned with the informal, unaffiliated, youth-led hiking movement that made up the vast majority of the outdoor movement from 1930 onwards. The following section endeavours to determine the demographics of this strand, from the end of the War, using the sources discussed in Chapter 1.

In 1919, the St Philip's YMCA Settlement Education and Economics Research Society (St Philip's Survey) asked 246 working-class men and women living in Sheffield detailed questions about their activities in the evenings, on free afternoons, on Sundays and during annual holidays.[36] Twenty men (17 per cent) and sixteen women (13 per cent) identified walking as one of their main leisure activities. In most cases, it is hard to judge from the interview notes how long their walks were, but the existence of a strenuous country-walking tradition in the immediate pre- and post-War years is strongly suggested by newspaper articles, pamphlets and books apparently aimed at the independent walker, including *Highways and Byways of Derbyshire* (1905); *Across the Derbyshire Moors* (1906); and *More Rambles Round Sheffield* (1915).[37] Most self-designated walkers came from 'respectable' households, and there was a strong correlation between walking, skilled work (and therefore union membership) and other 'rational' leisure activities, such as reading, music, and attending lectures.[38] A few individuals from 'rough' households also walked in the country, but the middle-class interviewers were sceptical that their motives for doing so were recreational. 'Jenall', 38, for example, was a skilled building operative:

> His defects as a worker are due to drink…He does not want to go 'back to the land' but if he were rich enough he would be a sporting gentleman. I have seen the stockings that Jenall puts over his clogs when he visits *his* orchards. I have

[35] See page 134.
[36] *St Philip's Survey*. Total sample 816; interview notes published for 246.
[37] J. Derry, *Across the Derbyshire Moors: Twelve Rambles near Sheffield*, 4th edn, (Sheffield, 1906); J. B. Firth, *Highways and Byways of Derbyshire* (1905); C. H. Chandler, *More Rambles around Sheffield* (Sheffield, 1915).
[38] The survey divided the sample into those 'well equipped', 'inadequately equipped' and 'mal-equipped' to deal with 'the seriousness and splendour of existence'. In essence, it was a middle-class assessment of the 'respectability' of the individuals interviewed.

> seen his dogs returning with his 'bag'. I have seen his breakfast can full of new-laid eggs, which he has not bought…But he can appreciate grand scenery. I have heard him discourse upon the places he has seen when tramping.[39]

The questionnaire asked 'Is X a member of any other Club or Society?', but none of the interviewees referred to membership of a rambling, natural history society or field club, and many self-designated walkers specifically stated that they walked alone or with friends and family. Seven years later, when the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation was formed, there were twenty formal rambling clubs in the region, representing perhaps 2,000 members out of a total population of around 500,000, i.e. less than 1 per cent of the population. Even allowing for the many deficiencies of the St Philip's Survey, this suggests that the majority of recreational walkers in Sheffield immediately after the War were *not* members of formal rambling clubs.

A subsequent survey of juveniles (defined as 14-18) in Sheffield (the 'Owen Survey') provides an important sequel to the St Philip's Survey.[40] The survey followed a representative sample of 500 boys and 500 girls for a three-year period after leaving school in 1927. Most found work within one week of leaving school. Just 4 per cent of boys and 12 per cent of girls remained unemployed after 12 months, and most of the latter were not seeking work. Some 19 per cent of boys (30 per cent of those from 'good' homes) and 11 per cent of girls (15 per cent from 'good' homes) were members of adult-led youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides or Boys' Brigades. In most cases their membership ceased within one year of leaving school.

Table 4 sets out the percentage of juveniles that 'regularly engaged in these recreations during the three years since they left school'.

[39] *St Philip's Survey*, 315.
[40] A. D. K. Owen, *Survey of Juvenile Employment and Welfare in Sheffield* (Sheffield,1933).

Table 4: Juvenile (14-18) Leisure Activities in Sheffield 1927-30

	Boys %	Girls %
Cinema	72	73
Reading library books/weekly journals	53	62
Football	48	
Cycling	38	8
Rambling	35	36
Cricket	33	
Swimming	29	24
Dance Halls	7	28
Tennis	5	10

Source: Owen Survey, 42

The authors of the study reported that

> Rambling…is a very serious business for large numbers of Sheffield boys and girls. It is usually undertaken on Sundays, when great crowds of young people go out by tram, bus or the early morning trains to starting points for day-long tramps in the Peak District. Whilst there are a number of rambling clubs in Sheffield, rambling is essentially unorganized. Groups of boys and girls come together on their own initiative and wander and halt as they will. The magnificent country…quickly reached by excellent transport facilities at very low fares, is a splendid stimulus to the spirit of adventure and youth, and it provides an opportunity for boys and girls to meet and enjoy themselves in the open air…
>
> The most striking fact about the way boys and, to a lesser extent, girls use their leisure…is that it is usually the expression of individual choice, often involving the repudiation of all forms of adult authority whether expressed in the will or advice of parents, the direction of teachers, the leadership of officers in juvenile organizations, or in the social discipline of institutionalized recreation.[41]

The *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, conducted by the London School of Economics at roughly the same time (between 1928 and 1932) as the Owen Survey,

[41] Ibid., 43-45.

demonstrates that walking in the country was also a popular activity with youths in London.[42] The survey noted that

> walking as a means of healthy exercise and recreation has revived in recent years…All over London clubs of 'hikers' have sprung up which arrange collective walks on Saturdays and Sundays. So far the majority of London walkers are still drawn from the middle classes, or at least from the classes that follow sedentary occupations. But…enthusiasm for walking is spreading through the classes.

The word 'revived' is significant, suggesting that recreational walking was recognised as a popular activity among Londoners before the War and that it had been slow to recover in the immediate post-War years.

The London survey also recorded that

> camping attracts an increasing number of the younger generation…The taste for an open-air holiday fostered by [the Boy Scouts, Girls Guides and Boys Brigades] evidently persists into adult life…There has been a good deal of complaint of noisy behaviour at some camps.[43]

The YHA and SYHA, formed in 1930 and 1931 respectively, provide the most reliable source of data on the mass outdoor movement. However, it is important to recognise that membership of these two associations was not representative of the movement as a whole. The YHA charged 1s for bed, 1s for breakfast and for dinner, and 6d for a packed lunch. A week of hostelling therefore cost 24s 6d, plus transport. In the Owen Survey of juveniles in Sheffield, the median wage for boys aged 14-18 was 15s 9d and for girls it was 12s 3d per week. The best paid jobs were in coal mining (21s 4d); the worst in domestic service (7s 11d). Wages tended to rise rapidly for 18 to 25-year-olds, however, and a young clerk or skilled worker might earn 30s or £2 a week in the North, possibly more in South East and the Midlands where the new industries tended to cluster. Nevertheless, membership of the YHA and SYHA was beyond the means of many younger and poorer hikers.

Application forms for membership of the YHA asked for age (if less than 25), gender, address and occupation. The Association published data each year in its annual

[42] H. Llewellyn Smith, ed., *New Survey of London Life and Labour, Volume IX: Life and Leisure* (1935), 51, 60, 70. Sample size: 16,915 households.
[43] Ibid., 79.

reports on age, gender and region, but not occupation, and the original membership forms from 1930-39 have been lost.[44] Throughout the 1930s, the male to female ratio was fairly constant at 2:1 and around two thirds of members were 'youths', defined by the YHA as 18-25. The minimum age at which members could stay at hostels unaccompanied by an adult was reduced from 16 to 14 in 1936: 'As children from our elementary schools have to go out into the hurly-burly of industry at the age of 14…it was a mistake to deny them the right of using hostels on the grounds that they were unable to look after their own welfare.'[45]

Table 5: Analysis of Occupations of Members Resident in South Wales Region 1936-37
(All numbers expressed as a percentage of the total sample)

	Total %	Male %	Female %
Teachers	12	4	8
Civil Servants	2	1	1
Misc. Professional	5	3	2
Clerks	22	16	6
Shop Assistants	14	10	4
Students	16	13	3
Total Non-Manual	71	47	24
Coal	6	6	-
Metal	5	5	-
Misc. Manual	8	7	1
Total Manual	19	18	1
Domestic	1	-	1
Independent	1	-	1
Unemployed	1	1	-
Unaccounted	7	-	7
Total Other	10	1	9
Total	100	66	34
Under 25	67	48	19
Over 25	33	18	15
Total	100	66	34

Source: *YHAR* (1937), 4, 5, 11 (sample size: 1,077).

[44] Personal correspondence, John Martin, YHA Archivist, 9 Jan. 2015.
[45] YHA AR (1936), 16.

Despite the lack of published data on occupations, a short article in *YHA Rucksack* in 1937 gives a glimpse of the occupations of members in the South Wales Region in 1936-37. The data suggests that the YHA was largely composed of students and white-collar workers – clerks, shop-assistants and teachers – with manual workers representing just 19 per cent of the membership (see Table 5). Several academic studies of the interwar period have noted that, in the years immediately after leaving school, girls were expected to do more household chores than boys, and were generally more constrained by parental discipline.[46] However, as they grew older they earned the right to greater independence. This is borne out by the YHA data. Nearly all the female members were in employment (the 'Domestic' category refers to housewives, not servants) and the proportion of female members was almost equal to males in the over 25 group, but significantly less in the under 25.

Whether by coincidence or not, a subsequent issue of *Rucksack* contained an editorial entitled 'Are We Black-Coated Snobs?'[47] It alleged that some members wanted hostels to be 'a perpetual Saturday night camaraderie among a group of pals; no strangers, no nuisances, no difficult adjustments to be made'. It worried that the YHA might become 'respectable and tedious, if it cold-shoulders the young, the unemployed, the out of the ordinary'. Most outside observers, however, were surprised at the broad social mix. A journalist from the *Daily Mail*, for example, reported that 'during my tour of these hostels I have met office boys, university professors, shop-girls, women medical students, business men and housewives'.[48] Describing the SYHA in 1939, Borthwick observed that 'there appears to be no class of society to which the appeal of the hostels did not extend'.[49]

[46] Roberts, *A Woman's Place*; Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England*; Todd, 'Poverty and Aspiration'; and Todd, 'Young Women, Work, and Leisure in Interwar England'.
[47] *YHAR* (1938), 6, 1, 1 (The term implied clerical or professional workers).
[48] 'Trampers' Mansion Camp for 1s. a Night', *Daily Mail*, 6 Apr.1931.
[49] Borthwick, *Always a Little Further*, 133.

Table 6: Membership of the YHA by Geographic Region

Year Ending Sept	1933 Members	% of Total	1936 Members	% of Total	1939 Members	% of Total	% Inc/(Dec) in Members 1933-39
London	6,986	25	18,540	31	30,875	37	342
Manchester	3,760	13	7,203	12	8,627	10	129
North Midlands	1,994	7	4,786	8	6,735	8	238
Merseyside	3,462	12	5,797	10	6,649	8	92
Birmingham	1,870	7	4,016	7	5,610	7	200
West Riding	1,770	6	3,697	6	5,264	6	197
Northumberland & Tyneside	1,199	4	2,605	4	3,850	5	221
Wear, Tees & Eskdale	1,122	4	2,066	3	2,626	3	134
Gloucester & Somerset	1,020	4	1,598	3	1,860	2	82
South Coast	440	2	1,126	2	1,817	2	313
York, Scarborough & Hull	286	1	1,253	2	1,461	2	411
Warwick & Northants	643	2	1,047	2	1,358	2	111
Lakeland	693	2	1,223	2	1,328	2	92
South Wales	674	2	1,077	2	1,281	2	90
Cambridge	262	1	938	2	1,211	1	362
Oxford	750	3	827	1	896	1	19
Devon & Cornwall			462	1	757	1	
East Anglia			363	1	678	1	
Wiltshire			416	1	362		
National Office	974	3	728	1	173		(82)
Total	27,905		59,768		83,418		199

Source: YHA AR, 1933, 1936 and 1939

The geographic distribution of the YHA membership is also revealing. Table 6 shows membership by Region for 1933, 1936 and 1939. Despite the presumption in both popular and academic literature that the mass outdoor movement was particularly associated with the towns and cities flanking the southern Pennines, in 1939, 37 per cent of YHA members lived in London and the Home Counties, more than twice the total for Manchester and the West Riding of Yorkshire combined. Even more striking is the growth in membership between 1933 and 1939, where London is by far the highest of the major regions, while Manchester and the West Riding were both below the national average. Without further information on the social backgrounds of members, explanations for the wide regional variation in growth rates are pure speculation. However, if the results for South Wales can be extrapolated to the country as a whole,

one possible explanation is that the higher growth in London, the Home Counties and the Midlands reflects the higher concentration and more rapid expansion of white-collar employment for youths and young adults in those regions.

Data from the North Midlands suggests that most members visited local hostels. The most popular destinations for members from this Region were hostels within the region itself (which included parts of the Peak District), followed by North Wales, Lakeland, and Gloucestershire and Somerset.[50] London showed a similar pattern: half the recorded bed-nights were in hostels located within the Region (which included the Home Counties), with Gloucestershire and Somerset next, and the Lakeland Region third.[51] Anecdotal evidence suggests a similar pattern across the country, with hostellers regularly staying at the same local hostels, presumably because of limitations imposed by transport, cost, and time off work. However, maps showing the distribution of hostels show major clusters in remote upland areas such as Snowdonia and the Lake District. Many English hostellers also travelled to Scotland. In 1938, for example, non-Scottish, mainly English, visitors accounted for over 30 per cent of the total of 178,872 bed-nights in Scottish hostels.[52] This pattern of usage suggests that whilst the first priority was simply to escape from home into the countryside, given sufficient time and money many hostellers had a preference for the more adventurous and romantic mountain landscapes of the North and West.

Recognising that the Regions within the YHA varied significantly in size, in 1935 the YHA analysed membership as a proportion of the total population within each Region. The results are shown in Table 7 below. Using this measure, the proportion of the population who were members of the YHA in London was about average; higher than the West Riding, but lower than Manchester. However, as the growth in membership accelerated in London and stagnated in Manchester, the proportion in London probably exceeded Manchester by 1939. The per capita membership in Scotland was higher than in England and Wales, and second only to Germany worldwide. [53]

[50] 'Youth Hostels in the North Midlands', Ramblers' Federation Annual, Notts., Derby & Leicester Region (1933), 15.
[51] Llewellyn Smith, ed., *New Survey of London*, 80.
[52] *SYHA Handbook* (1939).
[53] Lorimer, 'Your Wee Bit of Hill and Glen'.

Table 7: Membership of YHA as a Proportion of Total Population in each Region

Year Ending Sept 1935	Membership per 100,000 Population
Merseyside	207
Northumberland & Tyneside	200
Oxford	190
Cambridge	174
Manchester	167
Birmingham	135
Wear, Tees & Eskdale	132
Lakeland	126
London	122
Warwick & Northants	115
York, Scarborough & Hull	112
West Riding	105
Gloucester & Somerset	98
North Midlands	94
South Coast	71
South Wales	45
Wiltshire	45
East Anglia	30

Source: YHA AR (1935).

The high ranking of Oxford and Cambridge, driven by the large student populations in these two very small Regions, reveals a previously under-recognised aspect of the mass outdoor movement. The Cambridge University and Oxford University YHA Groups each had some 500 members in 1935. While these numbers are relatively small in the context of the movement as a whole, they nevertheless represent a remarkable 10 per cent of the undergraduate population.[54] It is implausible to suppose that all of these were 'northern scholarship boys', so many must have come from upper-middle-class family backgrounds. Similar patterns presumably applied to other universities, but data is not available.

The high ranking of Merseyside underlines the strength of the outdoor movement in a region that has been overlooked in many histories of the outdoor movement. Liverpool was home to one of the earliest formal rambling clubs in the country (the YMCA Rambling Club, established in 1874) and one of the 'senior' mountaineering clubs (the Wayfarers' Club, established in 1906). It was the second city outside London to

[54] Mowat, *Britain Between the Wars*, 210.

establish a Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1923; had a flourishing university climbing club (established in 1930); and was home to many of the leading interwar climbers. A house-to-house survey of leisure activities in Merseyside, conducted in 1932, found that 30 per cent of men and a higher percentage of women from middle- and lower-middle-class occupations had engaged in walking as leisure during the week surveyed, compared with just 11 per cent of male manual workers and zero for female manual workers.[55] Most people in middle- and lower-middle-class occupations also had an extended holiday away from home: 'The country rather than the seaside was favoured by those who went away… much of their time was spent in camping and walking from place to place.' The authors stated that 'among the poorer workers the institution of rambling in the country is practically unknown'. Local rambling clubs were reported to have had a total membership of 2,500 in 1931, the majority affiliated to the Liverpool and District Ramblers' Federation. Once again, this suggests that the overwhelming majority of recreational walkers in Merseyside were not affiliated to the formal rambling movement.

The lack of recognition of the strength of the outdoor movement in Merseyside (in both popular and academic studies) appears to stem from the fact that, unlike the Peak District, there was limited opposition by landowners to walking in the Wirral and almost none in North Wales (the natural weekend destinations for Liverpool walkers). As a result, their activities received little media attention, outside the regional press.[56] The high concentration of YHA members in Northumberland and Tyneside is also noteworthy, and the lack of recognition of the strength of the outdoor movement in this region appears to stem from a similar cause: 'The Northumberland Federation of Rambling Clubs…has met with courteous co-operation…There has been no chopping of barriers with axes, no mass protests. The North has heard and seen little of enmity between ramblers, landowners and farmers, for there has been none to speak of.'[57]

The strength of the hostelling movement in Birmingham would also have come as a surprise to many, including contemporary commentators. In 1931, the *Birmingham Gazette* wrote that 'hitherto, Midland youth has not been at all remarkable for its "hiking" proclivities. Whereas in Manchester, Sheffield and other great cities of the

[55] C Jones, ed., *Social Survey of Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1934), Vol.3, 276, 295. Sample size 255, skewed towards 20-30-year-olds. 'Middle-class' defined as professional, administrative, technical, managerial and teachers; 'lower-middle-class' defined as clerks, shopkeepers and shop-assistants.
[56] E.g. Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, makes few references to Merseyside or Tyneside.
[57] 'Vagabond' writing in *The Sunday Sun*, 9 Apr.1933.

North, walkers set out in thousands every weekend.'[58] Given this widely expressed view, in both contemporary and subsequent academic accounts, perhaps the single most surprising feature of the YHA membership data is the very low proportion of YHA members in Yorkshire. In the City of York itself, Rowntree's second sociological study, carried out in 1935, recorded 841 Boy Scouts and 1,446 Girl Guides. There were also 270 male and 130 female members of the YHA, two thirds of them under 25: 'The local leaders [of the YHA] state that the membership tends to be confined to teachers, clerks and students. However, with the increased leisure now being enjoyed by manual workers it is hoped that membership will spread among all classes.'[59] The formal rambling movement in York consisted of just three rambling clubs, affiliated to the CHA, the HF and the co-operative movement.[60] The HF Ramblers had 80 members, two thirds of them women, aged between 20 and 30. Membership of the York Co-operative Ramblers was 'composed mainly of black-coated workers. This is not due to any conscious policy on the part of the club, which has made serious efforts to cater for the working class.'[61]

Possible explanations for the widely held misconception that the mass outdoor movement flourished particularly in Lancashire and Yorkshire are discussed further below, but first the participation in the mass outdoor movement of the unemployed (who were under-represented in the YHA data because of cost) is considered.

Numerous social surveys of the unemployed, and of poorer working-class districts, conducted during and after the Great Depression, agree that hiking was largely an upper-working- and lower-middle-class pastime. A 1937 survey conducted in Ancoats, a poor district of Manchester, for example, reported that 'holidays were more often taken at home, though cycling and, more rarely, walks into the country appeared sometimes as the week-end and Bank Holiday recreation of wage-earning sons and daughters'.[62] A survey of unemployed youths conducted in 1936-39 (the 'Carnegie Trust Survey') made similar observations: 'Hiking and camping are still largely pursuits of the professional and artisan class…the semi-skilled and unskilled industrial workers, on the whole, do not indulge in these recreations.'[63] The Survey stated that 'the more

[58] *Birmingham Gazette*, 31 Mar. 1931.
[59] Rowntree, *Second Survey of York*, 396. Sample size: 16,362 working class families.
[60] *One Hundred Years of Rambling: York CHA & HF Rambling Club 1908-2008* (York, 2008).
[61] Rowntree, *Second Survey of York,* 397.
[62] *Manchester University Settlement Study of Ancoats 1937-38*, 47. See also Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*.
[63] Cameron, Lush, and Meara, *Disinherited Youth*, 78, 80, 109, 119. Sample size: 1,821, 18-25 year-olds in Glasgow (714), Liverpool (587) and Cardiff (520).

ambitious young man from the working-class household is the one to suffer the greater distress of spirit during unemployment…Their problem is less that of economic security and more one of self-esteem', but claimed that most unemployed youths were apathetic: 'It cannot be reiterated too often that unemployment is not an active state; its keynote is boredom – a continuous sense of boredom.' McKibbin contests this assertion, and anecdotal evidence from working-class autobiographies and biographies supports his view, suggesting that many ambitious and energetic unemployed youths rediscovered a sense of purpose and self-esteem through hiking.[64] In a study contrasting the experience of unemployed youths in Europe and the United States during the Depression, Jon Savage also observed that 'in the United Kingdom, if they had some spirit, they went hiking'.[65]

In Sheffield, where there was an established tradition of informal country walking, youths set out for the Peak District in their thousands during the Depression, but few joined formal clubs. The Carnegie Survey noted that unemployed youths, in particular, were circumspect about joining adult-led clubs: 'They view with suspicion any overtures which they think may lead to interference with their personal autonomy.'[66] Eric Byne, a sheet-metal worker born in 1911, was one of the few participants in this informal outdoor movement who kept a detailed record of his activities. As one of his friends joked: 'Everything we did Eric recorded religiously, and he was the only one who did – he was, perhaps, the only one that could write.'[67] The eventual result was *High Peak* (1966), the first working-class history of walking and climbing in the Peak District.[68] During the Depression, the steel, cutlery and silver trades were all badly hit and a three-day working week was common even among those still employed. Byne estimated that by 1930, 15,000 walkers would leave Sheffield, Chesterfield, Nottingham, and Derby each weekend to explore the Peak. Initially worried about gangs of youths wandering through the countryside, local farmers and their wives (who were also suffering as a result of the agricultural depression) soon learned to cash in on the hiking craze by offering cheap food and accommodation. Those who could afford it stayed in cottages or youth hostels. The unemployed camped or slept in barns.

On the other side of the Pennines, Ewan MacColl (born in Salford in 1915), composer of 'The Manchester Rambler', received 9s 6d a week from the dole and spent much of

[64] McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, ch. 8, 'The "Social Psychology" of Unemployment in Interwar Britain'.
[65] J. Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (2007), 297.
[66] Cameron, Lush, and Meara, *Disinherited Youth*, 115.
[67] Quoted in C. Wells, *Who's Who in British Climbing* (Buxton, 2008), 85.
[68] Byne and Sutton, *High Peak*.

it escaping to the Peak District: 'The moors and mountains transformed me physically…toughened me…gave me the feeling that mine was the first foot ever to trample there.'[69] William Woodruff, born in Blackburn in 1916, left school at 13, and worked as a grocer's delivery boy before moving to London in search of work. He later won a scholarship to study at Oxford. Describing the reaction to the Depression in Blackburn, he wrote: 'We Lancastrians neither revolted nor whined. Instead, those who could, took to the fields and the hills…I knew not only the squalor of a factory town, I also knew the unforgettable beauty of the surrounding fields, moors, hills and rugged fells.'[70] In Bolton, Norman Kenyon (born 1917) filled the long hours of unemployment with walking: 'After I had been looking for work for weeks on end I would despairingly give up the task, and for many days following would ask Mother to put me up some sandwiches, fill me the flask with tea and off I would go to the moors.'[71]

Similarly, in Scotland the activities of the unemployed in Dundee included small stakes gambling and outdoor activities – sunbathing, swimming, cycling and hiking – 'whistling and singing as they swung in step along the miles out of and back to town'.[72] Ralph Glasser (born 1916) was brought up in the Gorbals district of Glasgow and left school at 14. Later he too won a scholarship to Oxford. As a youth, he paid 'tuppenceha'penny on the tram to the terminus at Milngavie, and then a tramp across the hummocky wasteland…tired but drunk with freedom. Dreams could soar…Hikers were still few, the enlightened who were joined in a mystic affinity.' Sitting around the camp fire, the 'talk was of politics, of jobs and apprenticeships…of sex and conquest… of the outdoors and its freedoms…thanksgiving for what we dreamed and breathed on the road'.[73] Tom Weir (born 1914) called the youthful exodus to the Scottish hills 'the great outdoor revolution'.[74]

Jock Nimlin, founder of the Ptarmigan Club, the first working-class climbing club in Scotland, was born in 1908 into a strict Glaswegian Methodist family: 'Sunday was the dullest day of the week…dressed in their best clothes…forbidden to sing or whistle [and] more or less confined to the house.'[75] Made redundant in 1931, and again in 1933, Nimlin recalled that 'during the slump there were many of the despairing and

[69] E. MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (1990), 185-86, 205.
[70] Woodruff, *Road to Nab End*, 389, 407.
[71] N. Kenyon, *I Belong to Bolton* (Manchester,1989), 5. H. L. Beales and R. S. Lambert, eds., *Memoirs of the Unemployed* (1934) includes frequent references to walking e.g. 9, 104.
[72] D. Phillips, *I Never Fell into a Midden* (Dundee, 1978), 40.
[73] R. Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals*, 2006 Black & White ed., 98 (first pubd.1986).
[74] T. Weir, *Weir's World* (Edinburgh, 1994), 5, 8.
[75] I. D. S. Thomson, *May the Fire Be Always Lit: A Biography of Jock Nimlin* (Glasgow, 1995), 10.

disillusioned who found a new meaning to life in the countryside'. Legend has it that the fire at Craigallion Loch, north of Glasgow, never went out because there was always someone there to tend it. The fire was 'a magnet for all the outdoor types escaping in growing numbers from the smoke and grime of the Clyde basin'. Above it hung a gallon drum of tea and 'the unemployed, people tired of city life, dreamers, poachers, hikers and revolutionaries…gathered to swap tales, sing and spend the night in the open'.[76]

Borthwick (born 1913), who wrote the 'Open Air' column in the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, claimed that Bruce's cave in Glen Loin, Arrochar, recorded more 'bed-nights' than the youth hostel in the glen below: 'Countless songs were roared around its bonfires as the smoke billowed up through the natural chimney in the cave roof.'[77] As Eric Linklater observed in 1935:

> Within recent years the Highlands have been re-invaded by human beings. It is…only a seasonal invasion, but it is vigorous, youthful, multi-hued, cheerful, vulgar…The invaders are called hikers…Many…must be the descendants of evicted Highlanders…I find it very pleasant to think of them worrying the deer that replaced the sheep that dispossessed their fathers.[78]

Nimlin's biographer noted that

> there was virtually no contact between the working-class clubs of the 1930s and the SMC and Cairngorm Club. With a dispersed and larger membership, the middle-class clubs produced guidebooks and journals recording their activities. The tight-knit working-class clubs kept almost no record of their activities.[79]

The few hikers and working-class climbers who did keep records were nearly all young journalists, like Harry Griffin, born in Barrow-in-Furness in 1911, who worked for the *Lancashire Evening Post*. Like Sheffield and Glasgow, Barrow was an industrial town with a high proportion of skilled workers, lying within relatively easy reach of open country, and a thriving outdoor community developed in the years immediately before and after the War. Echoing Byne's experience in Sheffield, and Nimlin's in Glasgow, Griffin recorded that the young outdoor community initially evolved quite independently

[76] E. MacAskill, 'Portrait of Jock Nimlin', *Climber & Rambler* 22, 9 (1983), 26.
[77] J. Nimlin, 'May the Fire Be Always Lit', *SMCJ,* 27 (1963), 340.
[78] E. Linklater, *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1935),129.
[79] Thomson, *May the Fire Be Always Lit*, 85.

of the mountaineering establishment, but gradually they infiltrated the FRCC – the most socially-inclusive of the senior mountaineering clubs:

> The climbing fraternity…consisted largely of the professional classes. There always seemed to be two or three professors, doctors, lawyers, business men and the like staying [at the inn at Wasdale Head]. If you didn't 'belong' you couldn't drink in the smoke-room but were condemned to the 'chauffeurs' room' at the back of the hotel….[In] the smoke room…serious , mostly middle-aged or even elderly, professional men of apparent distinction…relaxed after a hard day on the crags…by telling unbelievably tall mountain stories, or joining in the choruses of climbing songs.[80]

A recurring theme of working-class autobiographies of the era is the sense of wonder that many young people felt when they 'discovered' the countryside. With illustrated guide books still a luxury largely confined to a middle-class readership, many urban working-class youths had no conception of the country surrounding their home towns. Bill Peascod was born in 1920 in the small steel and coal-mining town of Workington, within sight of the Lake District, but he had

> never seen it or thought about it or even considered going to it…We seldom travelled anywhere. When we did it was on the bus, pushbike or on foot…the limits of our excursions on any particular day would lie within a radius of five or six miles of the kitchen fire.

Returning from work one day, all of that changed:

> I had been on night shift. When I came out of the pit…the morning was so beautiful I couldn't bear to go to bed. I cycled home, had a meal, then my bath…and set out – towards the sun. On that day, at seventeen years of age, I discovered Lakeland…It was a revelation.[81]

Alfred Wainwright, born in Blackburn in 1907, first visited the Lake District with his cousin in 1930. He too described it as 'a revelation so unexpected that I stood

[80] A. H. Griffin, *Coniston Tigers* (Wilmslow, 2000), 45. Also K. Smith, 'A Portrait of A. T. Hargreaves', *Climber & Rambler*, 18, 6 (1979); 'Who Was J. I. Roper?', *Climber & Rambler*, 17, 6 (1978); 'The Improbable Leader: The Tragic Career of Bert Gross', *Climber & Rambler*, 20, 5 (1981); 'A Profile of George Bower', *Climber & Rambler*, 19, 10 (1980).

[81] W. Peascod, *Journey After Dawn* (1985), 12-13.

transfixed, unable to believe my eyes...we were embarked upon the greatest adventure of our young lives.'[82]

The social surveys, YHA membership data, and autobiographies discussed above show that the mass outdoor movement in the 1930s cut across class, gender and geography, attracting participants ranging from public-school educated Oxbridge undergraduates to unemployed manual workers from the slum districts of Glasgow. The movement also cut across religious barriers. Nonconformists, particularly Quakers, had been prominent in the outdoor movement for decades, but the hiking craze also attracted Anglicans, Catholics and Jews. Oral histories, autobiographies and contemporary fiction suggest that second generation Jewish immigrants played a particularly prominent role in the development of the movement in both London and Manchester. In his novel *Jew Boy* (1935), for example, Simon Blumenfeld described a young Jewish tailor day-dreaming as he sewed mechanically in the East End of London: 'Soon it would be summer…Sunday rambles in the open country. Nice girls. Intelligent people to talk to. He was already climbing hills in the Chilterns.'[83] Hikers came from almost every walk of life. The main thing they had in common was their age: most were between 16 and 25. Their motives for walking in the country varied but the most common themes in accounts of the activity are freedom, adventure and companionship.[84] According to Dave Dee, for young Jews in particular, the movement 'represented…an escape…to an area of relative freedom from the strict religious control of their parents and elders'.[85] The vast majority were not members of formal rambling clubs and had no social connections with the upper-middle-class neo-romantic mountaineering tradition or the campaign for access to open country (although some acquired both *after* they had taken up the activity). In short, hikers were not heirs to a tradition; they were participants in a new social movement.

The Development of the Mass Outdoor Movement

We are now in a position to construct a timeline, starting from the end of the War, for the emergence of the 'hiking craze' and its gradual evolution into the mass outdoor movement. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the senior mountaineering clubs and the formal rambling movement recovered slowly after the War. The St Philip's and Owen Surveys suggest that country walking in the immediate vicinity of relatively small

[82] A. Wainwright, *Memoirs of a Fellwalker* (Harmondsworth, 1993), 22, 26.
[83] S. Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy*, London Books 2011 ed., 28 (first pubd.1935).
[84] There were exceptions e.g. Wainwright was a solitary walker.
[85] *Jewish Telegraph*, 11 Apr.1980, quoted in D. Dee, 'Wandering Jews? British Jewry, Outdoor Recreation and the Far-Left, 1900-1939', *Labour History* 55, 5 (2014), 564; K. Morgan, G. Cohen, and A. Flinn, *Communists and British Society 1920-1991* (2007), 192-4.

industrial towns and cities, such as Sheffield, was a popular recreational activity in the immediate post-War years, but according to Byne few walkers ventured into the high moorland country, and most of those who did knew each other by sight.[86] Based on interviews conducted as part of his PhD research in the early 1970s, Rickwood reached the same conclusion.[87] One of the reasons for this was the limited availability of public transport, partly because of a post-War shortage of coal but mainly because there was little demand for rail or bus services on Sundays.[88]

Both club and newspaper records suggest that the post-War revival of strenuous country walking, particularly in remote moorland and mountainous country, started between 1922 and 1924. This coincides with the extraordinary publicity surrounding the first three Everest expeditions, culminating in the death of Mallory and Irvine. Prior to that, winter walking in the hills was considered a particularly eccentric activity, but during the winter of 1921-22, two walkers died from exposure in separate incidents on Kinder Scout. It was ten days before the body of the first was discovered, and the accidents were sufficiently unusual to be reported in the national press.[89] Charles Montague, climber, author and leader writer for the *Manchester Guardian*, wrote at length about the deaths, portraying them as heroic acts of defiance against the futility of life.[90]

The following spring, the landowner, James Watts, restricted access to Kinder Scout for the first time because of a large influx of walkers, presumably attracted by the publicity.[91] In June that year, the *Manchester City News* first detected a 'craze' for rambling and, at almost the same time, Jim Southern, co-founder of the London-based Federation of Rambling Clubs, undertook to revise and update the 37 pocket guides to 'field path rambles' in Kent and Surrey, first published by Edmund Taylor (better known as 'Walker Miles') before the War.[92] The Manchester & District Federation of Ramblers' Clubs (the first outside London) was formed that year, followed by the Liverpool Federation in 1923. The Scottish Rights of Way Society also revived in 1923 and the first post-War Access to Mountains Bill was introduced by Gilchrist Thompson in 1924.

[86] Byne and Sutton, *High Peak*, ch.2.
[87] Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', 183.
[88] The *SCRH* (1917/18), 3, noted that 'with Railway fares up Fifty per cent…we shall be pleased when Our Boys have returned…and we can again resume acquaintance with some of our long distance rambles.' See also H. E. Wild, 'Genesis', undated photocopy, RAA 02/449.
[89] E.g. *Westminster Gazette*, 10 Jan. 1922; *Manchester City News,* 14 Jan. 1922; *Observer*, 5 Mar. 1922.
[90] C. E. Montague, *The Right Place: A Book of Pleasures* (1924); Gilchrist, 'Mountains, Manliness and Post-War Recovery'.
[91] 'Tableland Prohibited to Ramblers', *Stockport Advertiser*, 7 Apr.1922.
[92] *Manchester City News* 24 June 1922.

The first hints of the emergence of a distinctive youth culture within the outdoor movement start to appear around 1926. A correspondent in *Out-o'-Doors* welcomed the increase in the number of young walkers, 'despite his (often) uncouth garb and (sometimes) rather boisterous manners'.[93] When H. V. Morton published *In Search of England* in 1927, he commented on the novel sight of 'young men with hairy legs dressed as Boy Scouts' and 'brown-faced, muscular girls in breeches and stockings'.[94] In the same year, *Out-o'-Doors* accused young ramblers of 'nerve-racking noise and unseemly horse-play', while the Manchester Federation *Handbook* noted that 'groups of young folk…singing and shouting have violently disturbed the quiet of the countryman's weekend'.[95]

In July 1928, members of the Yorkshire Ramblers Club walking near Castleton in the heart of the Peak District were 'astounded by the hundreds of young people in walking rig all over the countryside. We understood they had entered the district by train.'[96] A special correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, sent out on successive weekends to investigate the activities of young walkers in Derbyshire in 1928, found no evidence of anti-social behaviour, but was struck by the colourful costumes they wore and celebrated 'youth which endures so much and is happy with so little'.[97] In 1929 a female correspondent, writing in *Out-o'-Doors*, praised 'the jolly, modern girl rambler with her practical jokes, her laughter, her song and her good companionship', but condemned the 'screeching fly-abouts on Chinley Station', noting that 'they were young and they were objectionable, and they were all girls'. She observed that in Castleton and Edale too, there were 'groups of hysterical girls, screaming the latest jazz song, falling helplessly on to the grass in convulsions of stupid laughter at nothing at all'.[98] By 1930, this deviant group had been labelled 'hikers', and *Out-o'-Doors* accused them of making Hayfield 'a place to which respectable people would not go…crowds of roughs and hooligans who make the days disgraceful and the nights hideous with their indulgences'. 'Wanderbird' noted in his regular column that prior to 1925, the rambler 'was a nature lover…and had the manners of a gentleman…Today…the new walking craze has aroused a keen resentment against *all* ramblers'.[99]

[93] J. Macauley, *OoD*, Aug. 1927, 6.
[94] Morton, *In Search of England*, 112, 187.
[95] *OoD*, Sep. 1927, 37; *M&DRFH* (1928), 29.
[96] *YRCJ* (1929), V, 18, 318.
[97] *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Apr. and 7 May, 1928.
[98] *OoD*, Nov.1929, 93.
[99] *OoD*, July 1930, 2.

Until 1930, the word 'hiker' was unknown to most adults. Carl Brunner, who became the editor of *Hiker and Camper* magazine in 1934, claimed that the word had been imported into Britain from America by the national press in 1931 'to describe that amazing wave of open-air enthusiasm which, suddenly and for no apparent reason, swept the country in that year'.[100] However, as noted above, the word had been in common use within the Scout movement for at least seven years. The *Daily Herald* launched the National Hikers' League in 1931, which was instantly condemned by the northern Ramblers' Federations as a 'press stunt'. In November 1931, the West Riding Federation noted that 'the "butterfly hikers" were out and about in their thousands on the fine days of summer…but now comes the day when cold winds, rain and grime show who are the real ramblers…The amount of attention that "hiking" is getting is nauseating.'[101] Meanwhile, the Manchester Ramblers' Federation banished the word 'hiking' from their *Handbook*.[102] The London Federation was more restrained, noting that the word hiking 'has been unpleasantly prominent during the past season…It has become associated *in some cases* with a type of person which does not do credit to the rambling movement.'[103] But young hikers were becoming increasingly assertive. In 1932, responding to a continuing stream of invective, 'Hiker of 19' challenged the *Out-o-Doors* correspondent 'Wanderbird' to 'a 40-mile "sweat"', via the letter pages of the magazine.[104]

It is instructive to contrast the descriptions of hikers in the popular and outdoor press with accounts left by the hikers themselves. In many cases, it is clear that both are describing exactly the same behaviour, but interpreting it very differently. Ruth Adler, the daughter of a small shopkeeper in the East End of London, recalled hiking on Box Hill, in the Chilterns, and in Epping Forest during the 1930s with the Youth Circle of the local Jewish Club:

> Ten or twelve came along…running noisily up and down the platform to find an empty carriage…even before the train moved out they were singing…Sometimes couples formed and wandered away after lunch while the others larked around until everyone had re-assembled.[105]

[100] *H&C*, Nov.1934, 289.
[101] 'West Riding Ramblers' Federation Notes', *OoD*, Northern Edition, Oct.1931, 83.
[102] *M&DRFH* (1932), 10.
[103] *Ramblers' Handbook* (1932), 15.
[104] *OoD*, Jan. 1932, 152.
[105] R. Adler, *A Family of Shopkeepers*, 1984 Coronet ed., 193-96 (first pubd.1973).

In the twilight they sang sentimental songs and debated whether Communists believed in free love. Alice Foley was born and brought up in Bolton: 'We were true denizens of the streets, born in slums and cramped spaces, and there we tended to stay'. After leaving school at 14 and working as a weaver she attended a Workers' Education Association summer camp in Bangor where 'we rambled together, swam…climbed a mountain or two…[and] led by our Welsh miners, we sang the evening into darkness – until a testy old colonel reported us as disturbers of the peace'. Like so many young hikers, the freedom, companionship and beauty of the countryside was a revelation: 'Complete happiness.'[106]

It was the uninhibited vitality, spontaneity, and lack of deference of the new movement that so alarmed older and more conservative observers. When the young members of the Morley College Rambling Club discovered a piano in a remote country pub in Surrey in 1928 they gave an impromptu concert:

> I wonder if that piano ever worked so hard before? It withstood the storm of the latest jazz; it placidly accepted the suavity of Chopin, and even took gallantly exquisite lieder arranged in dance form with convenient syncopation. That was vandalism…[107]

For the most part, the 'rowdy behaviour' and 'hooliganism' described by the older generation appears to have been nothing more than youthful high spirits, temporarily released from adult control and the drabness of urban life. As Bert Ward observed, at worst young hikers were guilty of acting 'like a chained dog that is suddenly let loose for a few hours'.[108] Their behaviour would have been perfectly acceptable at Blackpool or Southend, but in the socio-cultural context of the countryside they were regarded as transgressors.

It is unclear where the fashion for wearing brightly coloured clothes originated. Many contemporary reports suggest the Peak District but, as discussed below, there is an inherent regional bias in much of the reporting. Wherever it originated, the fashion spread with remarkable speed, carried by newspaper articles, often written by young journalists who were themselves keen hikers. In 1932, the *Yorkshire Ramblers Journal* observed that

[106] A. Foley, *A Bolton Childhood* (Manchester, 1973), 29, 92.
[107] Vaux, ed., *Morley College Rambling Club*, 16.
[108] G. H. B. Ward, *Highways and Byways*, 24.

> One of the amusing Press stunts of the last year or so has been the attention given to 'hiking' and 'hikers'. Originating in Manchester and Sheffield, the fashion of going about on Sunday in a particular type of costume has spread to other towns, and boomed by the Press has reached even *Punch* and the shop windows. Apart from Derbyshire, which appears to have been flooded with people every Sunday for years, there is undoubtedly a marked increase in the number of walkers close in to large towns.[109]

Despite the assertion that 'hiking' originated in Manchester and Sheffield, the word was rarely used in the Manchester area, even by the post-War generation. Nevertheless, the high profile of the Peak District, and the extraordinary prominence of Kinder Scout – roughly midway between the Manchester and Sheffield – in the history and mythology of the outdoor movement demands explanation. Most of the mountains and moorlands of Britain are located on the northern and western fringes of the country and were, even in the 1930s, relatively inaccessible by public transport. The southern Pennines were an exception. With major cities on both flanks, they were traversed by numerous roads and railways. The notoriety of Kinder Scout appears to have arisen because of two factors: railway timetables and density of footpaths.

In total, the gritstone moors of the northern Peak occupy an area of some 210 square miles, but Kinder Scout, with an area of just 12 square miles, acted as a magnet for walkers from the surrounding industrial cities because it was accessible via two railway lines linking Manchester and Sheffield. The London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) ran north of Kinder Scout and Bleaklow, via Woodhead, while the London, Midland and Scottish (LMS) Railway ran to the south, via New Mills (with a branch line to Hayfield), Chinley, Edale and Hathersage. In the early 1930s, the LNER did not operate a stopping service at the smaller stations between Glossop and Penistone on Sunday mornings. As a result, most walkers from Sheffield and Manchester used the LMS line.

Originally 'King's land' or commons, by the nineteenth century the peat moors of the Peak District were either privately-owned or held by local authorities as water-catchment areas. With a low population, and minimal agricultural value, they had an exceptionally low density of public footpaths: in 210 square miles of open country there were just 12 public rights of way that exceeded two miles in length. As a consequence, walkers arriving at the railway stations crowded onto the few available footpaths,

[109] *YRCJ* (1932), VI, 20, 147.

making their presence far more visible than it would have been had they spread out over this vast area of country.

Illustration 13: 'The Peak of the Hiking Season', *Punch* 'Summer Number', May 1931

Patrick Monkhouse, a member of the Rucksack Club, observed in 1932 that 'the few existing tracks…canalise the exuberant youth of Manchester and Sheffield; on a fine week-end they are as popular as a market place'.[110] Joad complained that any feeling of solitude was completely destroyed by the crowds: 'So close were we packed that we

[110] P. Monkhouse, 'The Pennine Way', *Spectator*, 25 Mar. 1938.

looked for all the world like a girls' school taking the air in a "crocodile" on a Sunday afternoon'.[111] The *Shell Guide to Derbyshire* (1935), edited by John Betjeman, warned that 'the Peak in summer is extremely popular with the young men and women of the industrial towns; it is positively yellow with their nether garments. If you dislike these people, you had better spend your week-end in the mud-bath at Smedley's than on Kinder Scout.'[112] As Phil Barnes, access campaigner and preservationist, observed in 1933, the exceptionally high density of walkers and exceptionally low density of footpaths also had one other effect: 'The great amount of trespass on moors adjacent to the L.M.S. Railway.'[113]

Nevertheless, the question still remains: why did so many walkers from Manchester and Sheffield press into this relatively small, overcrowded area of countryside? A separate LMS line, running from Manchester to Matlock, gave easy access to the Derbyshire Dales, passing through country praised by Ruskin.[114] Furthermore, access in this area was largely unrestricted. As Monkhouse noted: 'The limestone hills [in the southern part of the Peak District]…are used only for grazing, and there is no hostility to visitors; besides these hills are covered with such a network of tracks that there is little point in leaving them.'[115] Even Barnes, a combative access campaigner, conceded that 'there is no serious lack of footpaths in the Peak District apart from the moorlands areas. The rest of the district is covered by a network of roads, lanes and paths.'[116]

Perhaps walkers were expressing an aesthetic preference for the bleak landscapes of the 'Dark Peak', as Tebbutt, Darby, Cosgrove and others suggest.[117] Perhaps it was simply 'fashion' – the impulse to go where everybody else was going – or lack of knowledge of the alternatives. That was the explanation advanced by older ramblers at the time. In 1928, the Manchester Federation complained that 'another imperfection in our new adherents is their woeful lack of initiative. This has resulted in overcrowding of the popular places such as Hayfield and Edale'.[118] For a significant minority, the fact that access was forbidden was part of the attraction. As Benny Rothman, leader of the

[111] Joad, *Untutored Townsman*, 116.
[112] C. Hobhouse, *Shell Guide to Derbyshire* (1935), 46. (Smedley's was a genteel 'Hydropathic Establishment', founded in Matlock Bath in 1853).
[113] P. Barnes, ed., *Report on Access to Moorlands in the Peak District* (1933), 2.
[114] J. Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* (1871), Letter V, 87.
[115] P. Monkhouse, *On Foot in the Peak* (1932), 44-45.
[116] Barnes, *Report on Access*, 4.
[117] See Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity'; Darby, *Landscape and Identity;* D. Cosgrove, B. Roscoe, and S. Ryecroft, 'Landscape and Identity at Ladybower Reservoir and Rutland Water', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21 (1996), 534-51.
[118] 'The Rambler of 1928', *M&DRFH* (1929),13.

Kinder trespass, observed: 'Like all forbidden fruit it was very tantalising.'[119] However, the most likely explanation is that large numbers of hikers did indeed go to the southern Peak District, but their activities went unremarked by the press, because they spread out over a large area of countryside and encountered no opposition from landowners. Meanwhile, any journalist in search of a story about 'hikers' would naturally seek out the greatest concentration, which inevitably meant going to Kinder Scout.

The discovery of an unidentified corpse on Stanage Edge near Hathersage in 1930 rekindled memories of the two deaths on Kinder Scout in 1922.[120] In 1932 the popular journalist and broadcaster, S.B.P. Mais, described 'the high, vast tableland of Kinder Scout, a name to strike terror into the hearts of the unwary, for in its unprotected peat-bogs, called "mosses", many lives have been lost in snow and fog'.[121] In *The Beauties of England* (1933) Thomas Burke reported that the Peak District

> still knows death…Many have died here…peaceful citizens who have adventured into its lone recesses, and lost their path and have died on its cliffs as miserably as any lost explorer in a Libyan desert…Men have been known to lie helpless and exposed on these hill wastes for ten days, with only their bodies to tell the tale of their unhappy end. Every year has a record of two or three deaths on Kinder Scout.[122]

As Barnes noted in a report to the CPRE in 1933: 'There are many extensive tracts of land over which there is no appreciable trespass. The Kinderscout area is an exception to this…partly because of the notoriety the mountain has been given in the press during the past ten years.'[123]

Growing numbers of trespassers triggered increasingly draconian measures by the landowners, which in turn attracted more publicity, and more trespassers. Most were individuals or small groups of walkers, but in 1932 Kinder Scout was deliberately targeted for a 'mass trespass'. As discussed below, the mass trespass was an exceptional event involving a few hundred walkers. Nevertheless, the press coverage given to this and other access protests has resulted, in some cases, in historians

[119] NWSA, Tape 585 (1989), WCMA.
[120] Byne and Sutton, *High Peak*, 122.
[121] S. P. B. Mais, *This Unknown Island* (1932), 78.
[122] T. Burke, *The Beauty of England* (1933), 340-41.
[123] Barnes, *Report on Access*, 10.

conflating the activities of a handful of activists in the southern Pennines with a nationwide movement involving some 500,000 walkers.

Data from social surveys and from the YHA clearly show that the mass outdoor movement was not confined to, nor even particularly characteristic of, the Lancashire and Yorkshire towns on the flanks of the southern Pennines. As discussed above, there were high concentrations of recreational walkers in Merseyside, Northumberland, Tyneside, Oxford and Cambridge, but they received less press coverage, and have therefore received less academic attention, because there were few conflicts between walkers and landowners. The same was generally true of the Yorkshire Dales and the Yorkshire Moors. In *Striding through Yorkshire* (1938), Alfred Brown, vice president of the West Riding Ramblers' Federation, noted that 'in these wild and delectable places, it is the rarest thing to be challenged by an irate farmer or a keeper. Usually the few one meets welcome the opportunity of a chat.'[124] The Forest of Bowland, on the border of Lancashire and Yorkshire, was another black spot for access, but because it was remote from major conurbations it did not achieve the same notoriety as the Peak District. In Scotland, the Aberdeen-based Cairngorm Club noted in 1931 that 'comparatively rarely are any obstacles put up by ungenerous proprietors in the way of [walkers and climbers] following their pursuits'.[125] Further south, in the Midlands, the 1937 *Handbook* of the Birmingham & Midlands Federation of Ramblers' Clubs claimed that 'the average Midland rambler…does not know what all this "Access" business is about…In all the mountains…of which he has knowledge, the Longmynd, Caradoc, Wrekin, the Malverns, Clent, Lickeys, and Cannock Chase, there is probably sufficient access to satisfy his simple needs.'[126]

The most neglected region in previous histories of the outdoor movement is London and the South East, and yet, as discussed in Chapter 4, even the formal rambling movement was numerically stronger in the South East and the Midlands than it was in the North. At the peak of the hiking craze, Cyril Joad famously described Central Station in Manchester, early on a Sunday morning:

> With its crowds of ramblers, complete with ruck-sacks, shorts and hobnailed boots, waiting for the train to Edale, Chinley, Castleton and the Derbyshire moors, it might lead one to suppose that the whole of Manchester was in

[124] A. J. Brown, *Striding Through Yorkshire* (1938), xxvi. There were local access disputes in the West Riding, notably at Rombalds Moor (where Brown played a prominent role) and Blubberhouses Moor, but they did not achieve the notoriety of Kinder Scout.
[125] *CaCJ*, Jan. 1931, 12, 70, 222.
[126] *B&MRFH* (1937).

> exodus. And it is, indeed true that this generation has replaced beer by 'hiking' as the shortest cut out of Manchester.[127]

He later added an important (but largely ignored) observation: 'You could see a similar sight on the platforms of Victoria and Waterloo although, in the softer South, there were no hobnail boots.'[128] He might easily have added Paddington, Euston, Kings Cross, Liverpool Street, and any number of other mainline and underground stations, all of which provided easy access to open country in the interwar years, dispersing London walkers across a vast area around the capital. As Stephenson reported in 1934: 'At any of the London termini on Sunday mornings one may see armies of rucksack folk tumbling into trains for Kent and Surrey, Essex and the Chilterns, and even further afield.'[129]

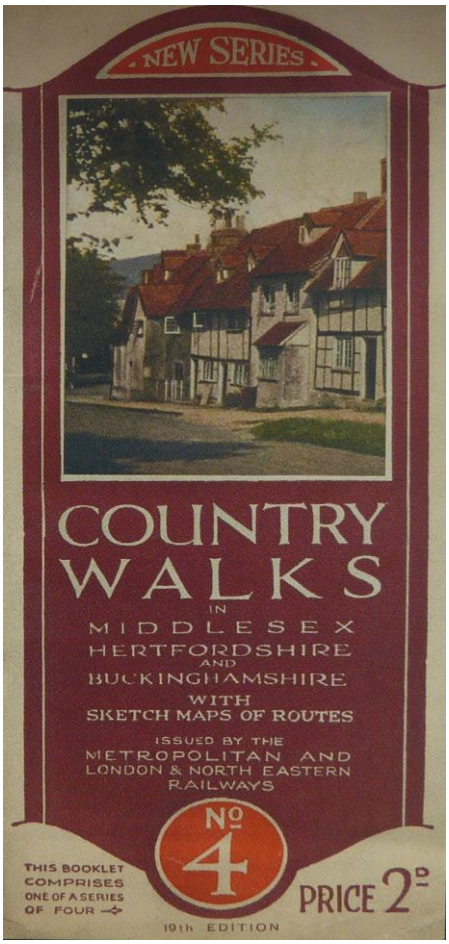

Illustration 14: 19th edition of one of a series of four Country Walks booklets produced by the Metropolitan Railway in 1929 (London Transport Museum).

[127] Joad, *Charter for Ramblers*, 12.
[128] C.E.M. Joad, 'In Defence of the Footpath', *The Listener*, 28 Feb. 1946.
[129] Stephenson, 'Walking to Prosperity', 14-15. Morgan, *Needs of Youth,* noted that 'until a few years ago it was a rare experience to meet young folk from the city walking on Dartmoor or the Mendips'.

Railway companies in the South competed vigorously for this Sunday traffic, offering concessionary fares, and producing posters and pamphlets celebrating the joys of walking in Epping Forest, the Downs and 'Beechy Bucks'.[130] Once in the countryside, London walkers had access to a dense network of footpaths passing through fields and scattered woodland, where their presence was far less visible (and controversial) than on the open moorland of the northern Peak. As Stephenson observed in 1939, the high profile of ramblers in the North was 'not due to any lack of ramblers in the south, but to a reluctance to congregate in masses, and probably in part to a want of common interests, or any struggle calling for action'.[131]

The misconception that the mass outdoor movement was above all a phenomenon associated with the northern industrial cities flanking the southern Pennines has arisen because of journalists in search of good copy; access campaigners in search of propaganda; and historians who have privileged the exceptional over the everyday. By 1930, hiking was a nationwide phenomenon and in most regions it had nothing to do with the campaign for access to open country. On the contrary, the very novelty of the activity meant that it was possible for groups of young hikers to walk and camp almost anywhere, including locations where today it would be strictly forbidden:

> What flawless [campsites] we chose: their very names are immemorial England! At Princes Risboro under the enormous cross carved on the chalk hillside of Whyteleafe; by Magpie Bottom in the downs above Shoreham valley; by the Hammer Ponds, near Horsham...within sight of Stonehenge; staring at the Long Man of Wilmington; on the banks of Coniston Water…in the meadows of a giant curve of the Wye, under the brow of Symonds Yat; or…high up in the Welsh hills, not far from Llangollen.[132]

Like most manifestations of youth culture, the hiking 'craze' was relatively short-lived. In 1933, the Manchester Federation reported a drop in the number of affiliated rambling clubs from 120 to 98. In 1934, *Out-o'-Doors* announced that there were 'hopeful signs that the "hiking craze" has passed…The fells and field paths are left to the ramblers, who jog along at a comfortable pace and apply themselves to the study of some branch of Nature, photography, or sketching.'[133] The Liverpool *Wayfarers' Club Journal* was less triumphant, but it too noted that 'the "hiking" craze in its less

[130] See Illustration 2, page 29.
[131] *Daily Herald*, 6 May 1939.
[132] Paul, *Angry Young Man*, 110.
[133] *OoD*, Mar. 1934, 109.

pleasant form shows some sign of abatement. There will be stragglers from the dispersed hordes, in whom genuine love for the hills may show an inclination to take root.'[134] By 1937, there was a decline in the number of formal clubs even in the South. The Southern (London) Federation noted that 'many of the Clubs formed during 1931-33 have disbanded, but with few exceptions those remaining…have regularly appeared in the club directory since its post-war re-appearance'.[135]

While the 'craze' did not last long, a more fundamental shift had taken place within the outdoor movement. The ageing membership of many natural history and field clubs gradually diminished, and the number of new rambling clubs being formed reduced, but the YHA, which largely served independent hikers, continued to expand rapidly, as did estimates of the total number of day-walkers in the countryside. Magazine articles suggest that many walkers (particularly women), who had previously walked in organized groups, gained the self-confidence and map-reading skills to organise their own outings, and no longer felt the need to join a club.[136] Ward's 'town larrikins' may have rediscovered the pleasures of cinemas (which were first allowed to open on Sundays in 1932) and pubs, but the relatively short-lived 'craze' introduced hundreds of thousands of young people to the countryside for the first time and transformed strenuous country walking from a minority pursuit into a mainstream leisure activity that no longer attracted the attention of the press. Even the initial shock at the outlandish costumes worn by hikers gradually wore off, as shorts and colourful 'sports shirts' became acceptable leisurewear for both men and women. The most significant aspect of this transformation is that it took place almost simultaneously across the whole country, and that it was led by youth.

[134] *Wayfarers' Club Journal* (1933), 35.
[135] *Ramblers' Handbook* (1937), 60.
[136] E.g. 'Pioneering our own Ramble, by Two Ramblerettes', Northern Rambler, Oct.1937, 54.

Privileging the Exceptional: The Historiography of the Kinder Trespass

Illustration 15: 'Returning from the Kinder Trespass' (Howard Hill).

It has already been suggested that the historiography of the outdoor movement privileges the exceptional by ascribing the motives of a handful of articulate activists to hundreds of thousands of recreational walkers, whose motives might have been quite different. Perhaps the most extreme example of this phenomenon is the 'mass trespass' that took place on Kinder Scout on 24 April 1932. For historians of the working-class movement, such as Howkins and Lowerson, who seek to portray the mass outdoor movement as a 'battle for the countryside', the Kinder trespass was 'the most spectacular of all the battles' and 'opened up the whole issue of rural/urban relationships'.[137] Yet the 'mass trespass' involved just 400 walkers, the vast majority of whom, according to the contemporary reports discussed below, were curious onlookers rather than participants. A second mass trespass, at Abbey Brook on 18 September 1932 attracted less support, and much less publicity, because there were no arrests. A third mass trespass, planned to take place on Froggatt Edge, 'died from apathy'.[138] It took another 17 years of campaigning (in which the leaders of the mass trespass took no part) to secure the 1949 National Parks and Access to the

[137] Howkins, *Death of Rural England*, 107.
[138] According to Stephen Morton, see Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 46; Rubinstein, 'Struggle for Ramblers' Rights'; Jones, *Workers at Play*, 190.

Countryside Act, and it was 68 years before the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) finally enshrined the 'right to roam' over open country in law, which was the purported aim of the trespass. The history of the Kinder trespass has been recounted innumerable times, and it is not the intention to repeat the details here, but equally it is impossible to ignore this iconic event in an account of the interwar outdoor movement.[139] This section examines whether a reinterpretation of the 'hiking craze' as a youth movement potentially casts new light on the events of 24 April 1932.

As already noted, the Kinder trespass was led by Benny Rothman, an unemployed, 20-year-old motor mechanic from Cheetham in Manchester, who was secretary of the Lancashire District of the British Workers' Sports Federation (BWSF). Like many recreational clubs affiliated to religious or political institutions, the BWSF was conceived by the Clarion movement and the Labour Party in the early 1920s as a means of recruiting and retaining young adherents to their creed. By the late 1920s, the London-based leadership of the BWSF consisted mainly of members of the Communist Party, but the national organization continued to be a loose federation of sports clubs, often with rather tenuous links to any political party.[140] Rothman had been a member of the Young Communist League before the BWSF, and was a lifelong supporter of communism, but even he conceded that the BWSF was not 'politically conscious'.[141] Stephen Jones maintains that 'the rank and file of the BWSF…were not the extraordinary purveyors of class-conscious thought which the leadership had envisaged', while Dave Dee argues that most members had little interest in politics, but nevertheless valued their membership as a means of accessing recreational opportunities.[142]

[139] Rickwood, 'Access Campaigns'; D. Cook, 'The Battle for Kinder Scout', *Marxism Today* 1977; T. Stephenson, 'Kinder Scout Mass Trespass', *Rucksack* 9, 8 (1979); Lowerson, 'Battles for the Countryside'; B. Rothman, *The 1932 Kinder Trespass* (Altrincham, 1982); *Kinder Trespass: 50th Anniversary* (1982); P.W. Rickwood, *The Story of Access in the Peak District* (Bakewell, 1982); *Kinder Scout Mass Trespass: 60th Anniversary* (1992); *Kinder Scout Mass Trespass: 70th Anniversary Celebration* (2002); B. Harker, 'Ewan MacColl and the 1932 Mass Trespass', *History Workshop Journal* 59, 1 (2005); D. Hey, 'Kinder Scout and the Legend of the Mass Trespass', *Agricultural History Review* 59, 2 (2011), 199-216; 'Benny Rothman & the Kinder Trespass 1932-2012', *Our History* 1 (2012); B. Rothman and others, *The Battle for Kinder Scout* (Altrincham, 2012); Walton, 'Northern Rambler', 262-66. See also Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, ch.5; Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, ch.7; Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, ch.15; Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*, 206-7.

[140] S. Bird, 'The British Workers' Sports Association (1930-60)', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 50 (1985); S. G. Jones, 'Sport, Politics and the Labour Movement: The British Workers' Sports Federation, 1923-1935', *British Journal of Sports History* 2, 2 (1985), 154-78; Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*.

[141] WCML, PP/ROTH/7 Interview with Benny Rothman.

[142] Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, 91; Dee, 'Wandering Jews?', 565. e.g. Margaret McCarthy claimed that the YCL was composed of a serious group, who aped their

Like many other sports and recreation clubs, the Lancashire branch of the BWSF organized walking and camping trips to the countryside surrounding Manchester in the early 1930s. Interviewed in the 1980s, Rothman recalled that the two things that distinguished the BWSF from the more established rambling clubs in Manchester were the class and age of the participants, describing the BWSF as

> newcomers to rambling…essentially a working-class movement when most of the rambling clubs consisted of…middle-class professional people...They believed that we were 'politically motivated' and loutish…To add to the problems there was a big age gap between us. We were very young, almost entirely under 21. The established rambling clubs were of a far older age group.[143]

Rothman therefore located the BWSF within the hiking movement (as defined by this thesis) rather than the rambling movement.[144]

BWSF camps were intended to be 'morally and physically bracing affairs of spuds, blankets and canvas', but perhaps the main attraction was that they allowed interaction with the opposite sex.[145] One attendee (who subsequently joined the Black Shirts) described a BWSF camp as 'bedlam, characterized by sexual immorality, "filthy" jokes, drinking and "communist depravity"'.[146] Rothman conceded that his main role as camp organiser was maintaining the segregation of the sexes, or 'keeping the buggers apart', as he put it.[147]

The idea for a mass trespass arose when Rothman led a visiting party from a London branch of the BWSF on a hike over Bleaklow. During the walk they were challenged by gamekeepers and sent back the way they had come. Such confrontations on the grouse moors of the southern Pennines were common enough, but a fundamental change appears to have taken place in the relationship between walkers and 'keepers during the late 1920s and early 1930s. When most walkers in remote country were respectable, often middle-aged, trampers and ramblers, relations were generally cordial, even deferential. An article entitled 'The Complete Trespasser' in the 1924

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elders, and a younger group more interested in 'fun, dancing, rambles, games and socials.' M. McCarthy, *Generation in Revolt* (1953), 64. B. Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain 1850-1945* (Manchester, 2005), 169.

[143] Rothman, *Battle for Kinder Scout*, 21.

[144] As noted in Chapter 1, the word 'hiking' was not commonly used in Manchester.

[145] Rothman Obituary, *Daily Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 2002.

[146] *The Blackshirt*, 7-13 Oct.1933 quoted in Jones, 'Sport, Politics and the Labour Movement', 167.

[147] *Daily Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 2002.

Ramblers' Handbook of the London Federation celebrated the game of trespassing, played according to 'its strict rules and also its more delicately shaded laws of etiquette'. The rules were, broadly speaking, what would later be called the Country Code. The etiquette consisted of being polite, of sharing tobacco and matches, and of parting friends.[148]

In certain parts of the country, a curiously symbiotic relationship developed between gamekeepers and trespassers, at the expense of the landowner. Many trampers and ramblers regarded outwitting the 'keepers as part of the sport and, in the midst of a deep agricultural depression, many gamekeepers were probably quite happy for the extra employment that trespassers provided, outside the nesting and shooting seasons. Stella Davies, a regular trespasser on Kinder Scout, recalled that

> enjoyment of the physical hazards was enhanced by the presence of keepers for 'keeper dodging' was developed into a fine art. The groughs made excellent hiding places and the number of keepers in relation to walkers ensured heavy odds against capture…The idea was to put Mr Watts [the owner of Kinder Scout] to as much trouble as possible and to put him to the expense of having large numbers of keepers on duty.[149]

Such attitudes were not confined to the middle classes. Byne stated that 'it cannot be doubted that many of the more sporting keepers enjoyed stalking and catching the more skilful trespassers'; Ward agreed that ''keepers admire this class of rambler, who will not be kept away and nevertheless plays the man's game'.[150] There were, without doubt, some aggressive 'keepers, and some obnoxious access campaigners.[151] Joad, for example, recommended various techniques for dealing with 'keepers, including ignoring them completely; talking to them in 'a governing class voice and with a cultivated accent'; or 'if you are a big man and the keeper is small, or, if you are in condition and a good runner…you simply tell the keeper to go to hell'.[152] But in most cases the relationship between 'keeper and walker appears to have been one of relatively respectful rivalry.

[148] *Ramblers' Handbook* (1924), 51-52.
[149] Davies, *North Country Bred*, 148-50.
[150] Byne and Sutton, *High Peak*, 78; *SCRH* (1934/35), 97. Tebbutt argues that the threat of confrontation enhanced the symbolic value of the landscape as a setting for displays of manliness. Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity'.
[151] See T. Stephenson, 'Ramblers in Bashemland', *Rucksack* 9, 6 (1979).
[152] Joad, *Charter for Ramblers*, 64.

This relationship started to break down with the arrival of large numbers of urban youths, a small minority of whom damaged walls, lit fires, broke into shooting cabins or slept rough in hay barns without permission. There was resentment among the 'keepers at being 'cheeked' by 'young roughs' from the inner cities. The problem appears to have been exacerbated by the increasing presence of female hikers, who brought out the worst in their male companions and the 'keepers, both of whom became less willing to back down. The presence of females certainly played a part in Rothman's confrontation with the 'keepers on Bleaklow:

> I'd been turned back a time or two when I was rambling, but never violently like that…I think they were showing off because we'd got a couple of girls with us…We were very upset naturally. Humiliated more than anything…we'd been shown up in front of our London colleagues.[153]

Rothman's response to being humiliated was to organise a mass invasion, on the grounds that, if there were enough trespassers, the 'keepers would be unable to turn them back. He targeted Kinder Scout, rather than Bleaklow, because he knew that it would attract greater publicity.

The BWSF had no involvement in the campaign for Access to Mountains before 1932 and, after a failed attempt to organise another mass trespass on Froggatt Edge, played no further part in the campaign. As a consequence, at the time of the Kinder trespass, Rothman had limited knowledge of the history of the long-running parliamentary campaign for access to open country. As late as 1989, he was surprised to discover (from the countryside campaigner Marion Shoard) that the access problem was largely confined to the North.[154] Nevertheless, like many young hikers, he clearly felt a strong sense of injustice that it should be 'a crime for working-class feet to tread on sacred ground on which Lord Big Bug and Lady Little Flea do their shooting'.[155]

Rothman's ignorance of the legal position almost certainly caused him to under-estimate the likely response of the authorities to his proposed invasion of Kinder Scout. Whereas previous access protests in the Peak District had been along disputed rights of way, illegally closed by landowners, Rothman proposed to mount a mass invasion of private land with no public right of way, disputed or otherwise. The action was therefore a direct challenge to private ownership of land. As the *Daily Mail* was keen to point out, from a strictly legal point of view, the status of Kinder Scout was no different from a

[153] Interview with Rothman, *NWSA* (1989), 6, 7 (WCMA).
[154] Ibid., 6.
[155] BWSF flyer, reported in *Manchester Guardian*, 7 July 1932.

suburban back garden: 'Grandmamma, watering her roses, will see the garden gate thrust open and a group of the Manchester and District Ramblers' Section of the British Workers Sports' Federation coming in to see what a private rose garden looks like.'[156] Moreover, in an extraordinary act of youthful bravado, Rothman gave an interview to the *Manchester Evening News* a week before the planned protest, in which he promised 'to throw 200 or 300 shock troops into an attack upon Kinder Scout'.[157] Immediately before the trespass, he also promised to 'scrap and fight for worker-ramblers'.[158] Rothman's actions on the day suggest that he had little understanding of the gravity of what he was doing.

The total membership of the Lancashire District of the BWSF is unclear, but attendance at their camps was typically around 50 people.[159] They were joined on the mass trespass by some members from the Sheffield District. However, many members from both cities did not participate and one who did later wrote: 'I took the whole affair nothing like so seriously as Benny Rothman…For me it was somewhat of a "lark".'[160] Because of the press coverage in Manchester, and flyers handed out by BWSF supporters at the stations in Sheffield and Manchester where hikers gathered on their way to the Derbyshire moors, a crowd of about 400 gathered at the appointed meeting place in Hayfield to witness the attack on Kinder Scout.[161] A local newspaper recorded that 'there were many more lookers-on than there were participators in the day's events. The village resembled a huge fair.'[162]

In the early 1930s, access demonstrations in the Peak District regularly attracted good crowds, and there is little doubt that many northern walkers supported a change in the law. Attendance at the annual rallies in the Winnats Pass peaked in 1932 (the same year as the mass trespass) when 8,000 people reportedly attended. Some accounts claim that this was a direct result of the harsh prison sentences handed down to five of the Kinder trespassers, but in fact the Winnats rally took place before the conclusion of the trial.[163] A demonstration organized by the BWSF on 17 July 1932, *after* the sentences had been handed down, attracted fewer than 100 supporters, and the Winnats rally the following year was abandoned altogether because of rain (a much

[156] *Daily Mail*, 3 July 1932.
[157] 18 April 1932.
[158] The *Reporter*, 30 Apr.1932.
[159] Rothman Obituary, *Daily Telegraph,* 25 Jan. 2002. Rothman stated that there were fifteen affiliated clubs in Lancashire and two in Sheffield. Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 183.
[160] Letter from V. Hall, 19 Nov.1991 (WCMC, Box 8).
[161] Accounts vary. At the trial, the police estimated 200 while Rothman claimed 300. He later changed this to '600 to 800, perhaps 1,000'. Most commentators have settled for 400.
[162] *The Reporter*, 30 Apr.1932.
[163] E.g. Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 148, 6.

smaller gathering took place in the Peak Pavilion at Buxton).[164] None of this suggests that the Kinder trespass tapped into a groundswell of popular support for direct action or 'opened up the whole issue of rural/urban relationships'.[165]

Accounts of the Winnats rallies by access campaigners tend to portray them as earnest meetings at which the crowds listened attentively to the speakers. Stella Davies described:

> A colourful and heartening sight, for the westering sun struck down the gorge and illuminated the scattered groups of ramblers perched on rocks in the natural amphitheatre. Their vivid scarves and jerseys contrasted well with the grey limestone. Resolutions in favour of the Access to Mountains Bill were passed with acclamation.[166]

Contemporary newspaper reports and oral histories paint a somewhat different picture of a boisterous holiday atmosphere, with a few people heckling the speakers, and many more unable to hear what they were saying. In 1928, the speakers included Bert Ward and Charles Trevelyan MP – both highly respected figures in the access movement – but the *Daily Dispatch* recorded: 'Here was holiday: laughter, music…and song. Footballs were bustled about from party to party…and boys and girls romped together as happily as only boy and girl ramblers can.'[167] Having fun is not, of course, incompatible with political protest, but equally it is possible that, for many participants, the rallies simply provided an interesting destination for a weekend ramble or cycle ride. Likewise, many of the crowd of 400 that gathered in Hayfield on 24 April 1932 probably set out with the simple intention of going for a walk.

Among the more prominent 'mass trespassers' present that day were the young composer Michael Tippett (born 1905) and the historian A.J.P. Taylor (born 1906). While both had left-wing sympathies, neither of them belonged to the BWSF, nor could they be described as 'under-privileged workers', which is how some access campaigners have sought to portray the participants in the trespass.[168] Taylor was, nevertheless, a fairly typical hiker. In his autobiography, he recalled that during his time as a young lecturer at Manchester University

[164] *Daily Sketch* 18 July 1932 (The *Worker Sportsman*, Aug.1932, claimed 250). *M&DRFH* (1934).
[165] Howkins, *The Death of Rural England,*107.
[166] Davies, *North Country Bred*, 150.
[167] *Daily Dispatch*, 25 June 1928.
[168] Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 184.

> we managed at least one all-day walk each weekend, trespassing on Kinder Scout or Bleaklow. I remember one such walk when Ray Eastwood (Professor of Law) made us creep along under a wall for half a mile on the alarm that some gamekeepers were on the watch for us. It turned out that there were no gamekeepers and that Ray was playing a prank on Bullock, the professor of Italian, also with us, who was extremely law-abiding.[169]

The events that took place after the crowd walked up the public footpath towards Kinder Scout have become part of the mythology of the access movement. Although reports of the day are confused and contradictory, it is clear that only a small minority of the 400 so-called 'mass trespassers' actually took part in the trespass. The *Manchester Guardian* put the number at 40.[170] This number was disputed by some protesters, but most accounts agree that the overwhelming majority remained on the public footpath, reclaimed through legal process by the PD&NCFPS in 1897, while a much smaller group of activists left the footpath and climbed a short distance onto private land, where a confrontation took place with a group of about ten or twelve gamekeepers.[171]

Stephen Morton claimed that the brief fracas was started by a young female hiker:

> I am told by people who were there that there would have been no scuffle, if one girl, tired of the frustrating chat between keepers and demonstrators, and thinking she was to be done out of a bit of excitement, shouted 'Go on John, hit him'. John did just that and 'let battle commence'.[172]

A sensational report written by a 'special correspondent' for the *Daily Express* claimed that 'blows were freely given. The girl hikers pitted their weight against the moor guardians'.[173] While both of these claims are unsubstantiated, they do suggest that, in the minds of older ramblers and journalists, the presence of young females added a new dimension to the age-old contest between trespassers and gamekeepers.

In 1897, after the PD&NCFPS had successfully negotiated the re-opening of the public right of way from the Snake Inn to Hayfield, the party of walkers celebrating the official re-opening was greeted by hundreds of cheering locals and a brass band played them

[169] A.J.P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (1983), 155.
[170] The *Manchester Guardian*, 25 Apr.1932.
[171] There were 17 gamekeepers in total patrolling the whole of the moor.
[172] *Rucksack*, Winter 1980, 18.
[173] 25 Apr.1932.

into the village.[174] In contrast, in 1932, when the crowd returned to Hayfield after the 'mass trespass' (see Illustration 15) using the same public footpath, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Dispatch* both reported that the 'indignant' villagers were 'jubilant' when police made six arrests.[175] The police appear to have been reasonably successful in identifying the ringleaders, but there is also a clear suggestion of anti-Semitism, since four of the six men arrested – Benny Rothman, Julius Clyne, Harry Mendel and David Nussbaum – were from Jewish immigrant families. A fifth man, Arthur Gillett, was a Quaker student from Manchester University. The sixth, John Anderson, claimed that he was there to protest against the use of violence. Anderson was found guilty of causing bodily harm and sentenced to six months in prison. Rothman, Clyne, Nussbaum and Gillet were found guilty of riotous assembly and given sentences of two to four months. Mendel was acquitted. None of the defendants was found guilty of trespass, because trespass is not a crime; it is a civil offence.

The indignation reportedly felt by the villagers probably reflected the fact that the seventeen gamekeepers recruited to confront the '200 or 300 shock troops' promised by Rothman were mainly local men, and the villagers had no means of knowing what had actually occurred on the moor. While support for access to open country was probably reasonably widespread, there was strong opposition to direct action or the use of violence. As the local newspaper put it: 'The mass trespass movement seeks to take the kingdom of heaven by force. The wiser and better way is to gain and keep it by sweet reasonableness.'[176] The confrontation also ran contrary to the pacifist philosophy of the outdoor movement. Press photographs of the trespass show a number of protesters going to the aid of a gamekeeper who received a minor injury in the scuffle. Stephen Jones points out that in Britain during the interwar years the idea of sport was strongly tied up with notions of international peace and brotherhood and the BWSF had itself championed the slogan 'Peace through Sport' in the 1920s.[177]

Looking back at the end of the year, on what has since become the most celebrated event in many histories of the outdoor movement, Edwin Royce, 'the grand old man of the access campaign', opined that '1932 will not be remembered as a red letter year for the rambler'.[178] The *Ramblers' Handbook* of the London Federation did not mention the incident, nor did the London-based *Hiker and Camper* magazine. An editorial in

[174] D. Hey, *History of the Peak District Moors* (Barnsley, 2014), 160; Hill, *Freedom to Roam*, 31.
[175] 25 April 1932.
[176] *Oldham Chronicle*, 14 May 1932.
[177] Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, 75, 168.
[178] *M&DRFH* (1933), 85, 133.

Out-o'-Doors opposed the action, while Lawrence Chubb described it as a 'peculiarly stupid and mischievous business and those arrested should rightly face the consequences of their own foolhardiness'.[179] In 1979, Tom Stephenson, the veteran access campaigner, described the Kinder trespass as 'the most dramatic incident in the access to mountains campaign. Yet it contributed little, if anything, to it. Once the indignation roused by the severe sentences had subsided, the public interest soon faded away.'[180]

The significance of the Kinder trespass today derives not from the original event, but from the myths that were created about it during the late 1970s, culminating in the fiftieth anniversary celebrations in 1982.[181] Articles started to appear in journals such as *Marxism Today* in the late 1970s, characterising the incident as a significant battle in a class war waged between urban socialist workers and rural Tory landowners.[182] Writing in 1979, Howkins and Lowerson claimed that the mass trespass had profound significance not just for the access campaign, but also for the preservation movement: 'By drawing attention to the value of our areas of natural beauty, actions such as the Mass Trespasses have perhaps done more for the preservation of rural England than any action before or since.'[183]

For left-wing activists, the timing of the fiftieth anniversary was propitious. Margaret Thatcher's monetarist policies had given rise to levels of unemployment, particularly in the North, that brought back memories of the 1930s, reinforcing a political divide between the relatively prosperous, and largely Conservative, South and the relatively deprived, and largely Labour, North. Labour politicians including Roy Hattersley, Michael Meacher and David Miliband attended the fiftieth and subsequent anniversaries, seeking to attach their names to the event, despite the fact that Labour activists at the time had opposed the trespass.[184] Benny Rothman published his account of events in 1982.[185] Stephenson declined to write an introduction because, as he noted in a letter to Rothman, 'I feel your treatment is rather vague and misleading', but on the whole the areas of dispute between the two men were matters of detail.[186] The most significant change in accounts of the incident published since the late 1970s

[179] Hollett, *Pioneer Ramblers*, 189.
[180] Stephenson, 'Kinder Scout Mass Trespass'. See also Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 153 and Rickwood, *Story of Access*, 4.
[181] See Hill, *Freedom to Roam* Ch. 6 for the counter-argument.
[182] Cook, 'The Battle for Kinder Scout'.
[183] Howkins and Lowerson, *Trends in Leisure*, 52.
[184] *Kinder Trespass: 50th, 60th and 70th Anniversary Celebrations*.
[185] Rothman, *1932 Kinder Trespass.*
[186] Letter dated 20 Aug.1981 (Box 6 WCML).

is the reinterpretation of the 'mass trespass' as an event of profound historical significance. Even the Ramblers, whose predecessor associations actively opposed the mass trespass and in some cases believed that it actually set-back the campaign for access to open country, now hail the 'mass trespass' as 'the start of an access movement that saw the establishment of National Parks, long distance footpaths including National Trails and finally, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000'.[187]

Shortly before he died, Stephen Morton wrote a personal letter to Rothman:

> Whilst you and I would probably disagree about how much your mass trespass was responsible for the 1949 act, I can't [deny?] the fact that in the history, folklore and legend of our time, it is held to be so. I reckon it had no value in 1932, but since 1982, it is a most valuable piece of publicity for our cause. It's the kind of story which, in most people's minds, deserves to be the truth – even if it isn't. So you and your group are important historical figures….and those of us who struggled on…and eventually were successful, can only marvel.[188]

Some historians have sought to locate the 'mass trespass' within a long tradition of northern political protest and religious dissent. Katrina Navickas, for example, observes that political protests and religious meetings in Lancashire and Yorkshire have a history dating back to the late eighteenth century, noting that radicals and trade unionists often held mass meetings in fields and on moors, in part because it was harder for the authorities to control such terrain.[189] She claims that the landscape itself forms 'a visual and physical reminder of social structures and a history of conflicts over the freedom to meet as well as speak…The landscape formed the foreground rather than merely the background to protests.' Whilst conceding that 'the radical leaders or activists…had their own agenda', she argues that 'the experience and the environment were…vehicles for a more diffuse or less formulated political expression of the ordinary attenders'. In effect, Navickas appears to be claiming that the mere fact of attending a large gathering of people on a northern moor constitutes an act of political protest.

While emotionally appealing, this argument is both historically and geographically suspect. Most of the gatherings that Navickas records took place on the outskirts of the rapidly expanding industrial towns and cities (as her Google Map of the location of

[187] www.ramblers.org.uk/past-campaigns/kinder-80 and www.ramblers.org.uk/about-us/our-history (3 May 2014).
[188] Undated letter (Box 9 WCML).
[189] K. Navickas, 'Moors, Fields and Popular Protest in South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1800-1848', *Northern History* 46, 1 (2009), 93, 111. Also Darby, *Landscape and Identity*, 132-39.

protests so graphically demonstrates).[190] Today, in many cases, only the word 'moor' survives in the names of the suburbs that now cover the fields where they occurred. The few gatherings that did take place on high moorland (such as the Chartist demonstration near Blackstone Edge in 1848) were located close to major trans-Pennine routes that provided easy access for the residents of nearby towns in both Lancashire and Yorkshire. By the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Kinder trespass, a powerful emotional connection had indeed developed between northern regional identity and the high gritstone moors of the Pennines – the feeling that 'up here, what came to be called "Thatcher's Britain" seems very small indeed; a clearer view emerges…it is not "Their" Britain, but Ours'.[191] However, this connection depends upon an awareness of the exceptionalism of the northern landscape. Before the 1930s, the overwhelming majority of the population would not have known that the countryside surrounding their home towns was unusual. The association between landscape and northern regional identity arose as a result of the mass outdoor movement, not *vice versa*.

A few political activists who took part in the 'mass trespass', such as Euan MacColl, did indeed claim that rambling was an act of political protest, as reflected in his song 'The Manchester Rambler', composed soon after the trespass in 1932:[192]

> I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way
> I take all my pleasure the hard moorland way
> I may be a wage slave on Monday
> But I am a free man on Sunday

However, MacColl was not a reliable witness of the outdoor movement. Among other things, he claimed that '8 or 9,000' protesters took part in the Kinder trespass.[193] Most other commentators agree that, by the 1930s, even rambling clubs that were founded by political movements had ceased to take part in any form of political activism. Within the outdoor press there were constant calls to keep the movement free of politics,

[190] http://protesthistory.org.uk/moors (21 Apr. 2017).
[191] F. Reed, *On Common Ground* (1991), 7, quoted in Darby, *Landscape and Identity,* 219. Tebbutt contrasts the 'intense physical and emotional relationship' with the gritstone moors of the Peak District to the 'passive contemplation of scenic views…associated with elite consumption', arguing that the emotional dimension was more important than politics in the struggle for access. Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity', 1126. See also Westaway, 'Origin and Development of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing Tourism in the Lake District'.
[192] Harker, 'Ewan MacColl', 222.
[193] *Radio Times*, 7 July 1970, 9.

particularly as the geopolitical situation deteriorated during the 1930s.[194] An article in *Hiker and Camper* in 1933 was typical:

> I know, and I want to know, nothing about the political labels of those with whom I hike…Communists and Tories, Radicals and Fascists will be all the fitter if they discard political theories in the open air. It should be warning enough to remember how party politics have damaged the open air movement in Germany.[195]

Both *Tramper and Cyclist* and the *Daily Herald* (partly owned by the Trades Union Congress) also encouraged their readers to leave politics at home when they went hiking.[196] Even access demonstrations, including the annual rally in the Winnats Pass, were essentially apolitical: 'Both Blackshirts and Communists attended the rallies held each year in the Peak District to press for access to the moors but were rather resented on the grounds that they were there to make political converts, rather than as genuine ramblers.'[197]

John Walton gives a balanced assessment of the significance of the Kinder trespass when he argues that it came 'to accumulate great symbolic importance, as a reservoir of anger and injustice, which could be tapped by future campaigns'.[198] But the symbolic importance that it accumulated during the Thatcher years should not obscure the fact that, at the time, the 'mass trespass' was an exceptional event: it did not form part of a nationwide pattern of protests; the vast majority of the 400 'trespassers' were simply onlookers; and there is little basis for extrapolating the actions of 40 or so local activists to a nationwide movement of some 500,000 people. Instead, the 'mass trespass' was a spontaneous, slightly rowdy gathering of young hikers, in response to a brilliant, naïve act of youthful bravado by a remarkable 20-year-old self-publicist. As the *Manchester Guardian* observed in July 1932, the incident bore more resemblance to a student rag than to a political protest.[199]

Nevertheless, the Kinder trespass reveals the growing self-confidence and assertiveness of interwar hikers. The grainy newspaper photographs of the 'mass trespass' show that all the participants were young. Their motives for being there may

[194] Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents', 586; Hey, 'Kinder Scout and the Legend of the Mass Trespass'.
[195] *H&C*, Mar. 1933, 3, 2.
[196] *Daily Herald*, 17 June 1933. 'On Politics', *T&C*, Apr.1934, 52.
[197] Holt, 'Hikers and Ramblers', 59.
[198] Walton, 'Northern Rambler', 264.
[199] *Manchester Guardian*, 11 July 1932.

have varied, but they were prepared to defy the heavy police presence in Hayfield, unlike the older, more deferential, generation of ramblers. While it would be wrong to construe the mass outdoor movement as overtly political, and it clearly lacked any coherent ideology, the sympathies of most hikers appear to have been pacifist, internationalist and broadly left-wing.[200] The demographics of the hiking movement – students, skilled workers, teachers and clerks – were very similar to membership of the Left Book Club, founded by Victor Gollancz in 1936, which 'made *contemporary* thought, and discussion of great issues of the time, accessible to the lower levels of the social pyramid as they had never been before'.[201] Autobiographies and contemporary fiction suggest that many hikers dreamed of a better world and engaged in political discussion. In addition to arranging long walks through the Home Counties, Ruth Adler, for example, recorded that the Youth Circle of the Jewish Club in the East End of London was a hotbed of political debate, where 'Communists quarrelled with the Socialists and Anarchists, and the Zionists with the Bundists'.[202] Like Larry Meath, the fictional Marxist rambler in his book, Walter Greenwood (born 1903) was introduced to rambling by the Labour League of Youth. But as Meath pointed out: 'It's not all politics...There's the Sunday rambles in Derbyshire… They're a jolly crowd of young folk who go.'[203]

The Woodcraft Movement

The Woodcraft Folk, which formed just part of a larger Woodcraft movement, was one of the few, relatively formal manifestations of the youth-led outdoor movement during the interwar years, and the only one to leave an extensive written record of its activities. Its founder and 'headman' Leslie Paul (born 1905), in particular, provided a rare contemporary articulation of the philosophy and activities of the movement. The following section therefore examines the Woodcraft Movement to see what insights it can provide into the values and attitudes of the broader mass outdoor movement.

Robert Baden-Powell was inspired to establish the Boy Scouts by the Woodcraft Indians movement in the USA, founded by Ernest Thompson Seton in 1902. The Boy Scouts, in turn, influenced the development of the hiking movement, as discussed above, but Seton also influenced three much smaller British youth movements, all of which were founded or led by former Boy Scouts. Historians have tended to lump these

[200] Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, 141; Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, 90.
[201] McKibbin, *Parties and People*, 109; Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals*, 358.
[202] Adler, *Family of Shopkeepers*, 194.
[203] W. Greenwood, *There Was a Time* (1967), 228; Greenwood, *Love on the Dole*, 87.

three movements – the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry (OWC), the Kinsmen of the Kibbo Kift and the Woodcraft Folk – together, and to describe them collectively as the 'Woodcraft movement', because of Seton's influence. However, closer examination suggests that the Woodcraft Folk was an outlier. Like the Boy Scouts, the OWC and the Kibbo Kift were both adult-led youth movements, founded and led by members of the pre-War or War-generation, whereas the founders and early members of the Woodcraft Folk were all part of the post-War generation.

The first of the British Woodcraft movements, the OWC, was founded by Ernest Westlake (born 1855) in 1916. Derek Edgell describes it as a 'new age alternative to the Scouts'.[204] Westlake was a Quaker who, during the pre-War years, felt increasingly drawn to paganism, animism and mysticism, as well as being influenced by Seton's Woodcraft Indians. The first 'folkmoot' of the OWC took place in the grounds of Westlake's country house near the New Forest, and the Order was established at Sidcot, a progressive Quaker school in Somerset, attended by Charles Trevelyan's children. In 1928, the OWC established its own 'Forest School', with an emphasis on 'learning by doing', a minimum of rules, and self-government by the pupils, who included Robert Graves' children. Unhelpfully for an institution that sought to demonstrate the benefits of outdoor education, the health of the pupils deteriorated alarmingly as a result of poor hygiene and diet, widespread cigarette smoking, and 'indolence and slouching' in the elder children. The school was wound up in 1937.[205]

Ernest Westlake was the intellectual driving-force behind the OWC. Following his death in 1922, his son Aubrey (born 1893), who had previously been a Scout leader, became the main organiser. Membership peaked at around 1,200 in the mid-1920s, but during the late 1920s and '30s the Order was subject to an increasingly bitter doctrinal dispute between a Dionysian wing that promoted sun-worship, nudity, free-sex and eugenics, and a Christian wing, made up largely of pacifist Quakers and Scout masters, who advocated vegetarianism and abstention from alcohol and sex. Aldous Huxley dismissed the OWC as 'little Red Indian Reservations of economic primitives…amateur peasants, incapable in most cases of earning their livelihood and dependent for their bread and butter upon income derived from the hated world of machines.'[206] Small, elite and esoteric, the OWC had almost no influence or connection

[204] D. Edgell, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry 1916-1949 as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* (Lampeter, 1992).
[205] Ibid., 428.
[206] A. Huxley, *Ends and Means,* 158.

with the interwar mass outdoor movement. However, Edgell claims that it had some influence on the 'new age' counter-culture that emerged in the 1960s.

The Kinsmen of the Kibbo Kift (archaic English for 'proof of great strength') was founded in 1920 by John Hargrave (born 1894). Hargrave was a charismatic leader who had been Boy Scout Commissioner for Woodcraft and Camping before the War and was seen by some as a potential successor to Baden-Powell as Chief Scout.[207] Like Westlake, Hargrave was a Quaker, but he volunteered to serve in a Royal Army Medical Corps ambulance unit during the War and saw action at Gallipoli. In 1919, he married Ruth Clark, who was a prominent figure in the Camp Fire Girls, a British offshoot of an American sister organization to the Boy Scouts. Hargrave's expulsion from the Scouts and decision to found the Kibbo Kift was a direct response to his War experience, and his disillusionment with the nationalism and militarism of the Boy Scouts. He described the various youth movements that sprang up across Europe during the post-War years as 'a revolt, a nostalgia in a shell-shocked continent'.[208]

In its first incarnation, the Kibbo Kift achieved a membership of around 400 with a focus on woodcraft, camping and hiking.[209] However, it gradually metamorphosed into a political movement, advocating social credit, and a paramilitary organization called the 'Green Shirts', as a result of Hargrave's restless search for an ideology to underpin his personal ambition. In the process, it drew support from a range of prominent 'progressive' thinkers, including Henry Havelock Ellis, the influential writer on human sexuality; Julian Huxley, the evolutionary biologist and a prominent member of the British Eugenics Society; Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, a theosophist and campaigner for women's rights; and H. G. Wells. For a time, even Lawrence Chubb, Secretary of the Commons Society, was a member of the Kibbo Kift advisory council.[210]

In an article entitled 'Change without a Break', written in 1932, Hargrave claimed that the transformation 'from a camping and woodcraft movement into a potentially powerful political instrument' had occurred without loss of continuity.[211] However, during the 1920s the Kibbo Kift lost most of its original members, who were either confused or simply indifferent to Hargrave's ideological peregrinations, and were far more

[207] See J. Hargrave, *The Great War Brings It Home* (1919); J. Hargrave, *Confessions of the Kibbo Kift* (1927); J Hargrave, Kibbo Kift (1931); J. L. Finlay, 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts, and Social Credit', *JCH* 5, 1 (1970), 53-71; J. F. C. Craven, 'Redskins in Epping Forest: John Hargrave, the Kibbo Kift and the Woodcraft Experience' (PhD, UCL, 1998).
[208] Hargrave, *Confessions of the Kibbo Kift*, 38.
[209] Walker, 'Outdoor Movement', 6.
[210] Craven, 'Redskins in Epping Forest', 30.
[211] *Broadsheet*, June 1932, 1.

interested in camping and hiking.[212] Among those who left was Leslie Paul, then aged 19.[213] Disillusioned with Hargrave's increasingly autocratic and aloof style of leadership, Paul and a group of young friends submitted a motion of censure at the 1924 Kibbo Kift Althing in protest, amongst other things, at Hargrave's refusal to recognise Paul as the headman of a local branch of the Kibbo Kift in south London.[214] The motion resulted in the expulsion of about a third of the members present, and Paul and his supporters decided to establish a new, youth-led, working-class outdoor movement.

In many respects, Paul's objectives in setting up the new movement were closer to the British Workers' Sports Federation than they were to the two other Woodcraft movements:

> It is a strange and perturbing thought that the working class movement of this country, with its genius for organization, should have shown an almost complete disregard of the importance of organising the children and young people from its own homes…In the meantime we allow the imperialists, the militarists, the churches and the social workers to have a free hand.[215]

Initially, Paul attempted to establish an overtly socialist Left Scout Movement.[216] The group received some support from the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society in south London, but failed to gain traction because most of the young members were more interested in outdoor activities than in politics. He was more successful in uniting various disaffected members of the Kibbo Kift, the Scouts and the Co-operative Junior Guild into a new movement in 1925, which he called the Woodcraft Folk.[217] Although the Woodcraft Folk received continuing support from the Co-operative Movement, it was less overtly political than its predecessor. Paul acknowledged the Kibbo Kift as the 'parent movement' of the Folk, and adopted many of its customs and ceremonies, including a 'uniform' of shorts and a green jerkin, but he emphatically rejected Hargrave's authoritarianism and sought to build a more egalitarian youth movement.[218]

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[212] Finlay, 'John Hargrave', 58.
[213] Paul, *Folk Trail*; L. Paul, *The Republic of Children* (1938); Paul, *Angry Young Man*; D. Prynn, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70', *JCH* 18, 1 (1983), 79-95. M. Davis, *Fashioning a New World: A History of the Woodcraft Folk.* (Loughborough: 2000).
[214] YMA/KK/2.
[215] Preface to Paul, *Republic of Children*.
[216] Davis, *Fashioning a New World*, 31.
[217] https://vimeo.com/channels/woodcraftfolk/38327735 (2 Aug. 2017).
[218] *Herald of the Folk*, Feb. 1931, 2.

The 1926 Charter of the Woodcraft Folk emphasised the importance of camping and woodcraft as a means of self-development, but it also expressed a desire to establish a new social order, with a commitment to World Peace and Co-operation.[219] In the first edition of the *Herald of the Folk* in March 1927, Paul admitted that the philosophy of the movement was 'an idea, still slowly gathering coherence' and made no attempt to lay out a political programme to achieve the ideals set out in the Charter.[220] Two years later, he characterised the Woodcraft Folk as a 'cultural revolt', and at the Althing that year a motion was carried asserting that the 'Folk were outside party political activity'.[221] During the 1930s, the Woodcraft Folk gradually evolved into a more conventional adult-led youth movement with a focus on woodcraft and education. Membership reached 5,134 by 1939, but by then it had lost much of its sense of intimacy and spontaneity.[222] After the Second World War, it became part of the Co-operative Education Movement. But in its early years, the Woodcraft Folk was emphatically a youth-led outdoor movement. According to Paul, all of the original members were under 21.

Like the BWSF, the Woodcraft Folk played a minor role in the campaign for access to open country. A Sheffield branch of the Folk was established in 1929 when a group of young hikers, including Albert Richardson, who later became Lord Mayor of Sheffield, set out to trespass along Stanage Edge.[223] When the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation organized a mass trespass along the Duke of Norfolk's Road to Abbey Brook (a disputed right of way), five months after the more celebrated Kinder trespass in 1932, a young participant recorded that there were more Woodcraft Folk present than anybody else: 'We got plenty of stares as we marched along singing Woodcraft and "bolshie" songs.'[224] However, just like the BWSF, the main attraction of the movement was recreational, rather than political: 'The Sunday ramble offered the opportunity…to meet other young people who had nothing to do on Sunday – it was a mass escape that offered excitement and freedom.'[225]

[219] L. Paul, 'Who's for the Folk?' (1926).
[220] *Herald of the Folk*, Mar. 1927, 1.
[221] L. Paul, 'The Cultural Revolt', *Herald of the Folk*, Nov. 1929, 5; *Herald of the Folk*, June 1929, 1.
[222] Davis, *Fashioning a New World*, 123. *Herald of the Folk*, Jan. 1934, 11, 14.
[223] Ibid., 131; *Folk Yearbook* 1929-30, 7.
[224] *Kinder Scout Mass Trespass: 70th Anniversary Celebration*, 18.
[225] T. Howard, 'The Moorland Access Campaigns', in I. D. Rotherham and C. Handley, eds., *War and Peat* (Sheffield, 2013), 262.

The Folk part of the name was intended in the German sense of *Volk*, and Paul later acknowledged the influence of the *Wandervögel* on the Woodcraft Folk and the broader mass outdoor movement:

> The tremendous wave of open-air activities… received its initial impetus in the spirit of the German Youth Movements…In England the direct influence…was slight…only the Youth Hostels Association…remains to mark the many efforts made in the 'twenties…But all youth, whether attached to organizations or not, have caught the contagion. The growth of hiking and rambling, of lightweight camping, of sun-bathing…youth hostels, and the spread of a new freedom in clothing and in the mixing of the sexes all, in part, derive from the example of German youth who in their finest days, did much to revive an almost pagan appreciation of sunlight and fresh air.[226]

John Gillis notes that before the War, the Boy Scouts were disciplined, religious, moral and patriotic, whereas the *Wandervögel* were defiantly unconventional, deliberately placing themselves in opposition to German militarism, adopting unconventional dress and uninhibited behaviour and gaining a reputation for sexual liberation. After the War, while the German youth movement drifted into nationalism and militarism, Gillis claims that Woodcraft movements such as the Kibbo Kift and the Woodcraft Folk were moving in the opposite direction, adopting many of the characteristics of the pre-War *Wandervögel*.[227] Trentmann argues that all three Woodcraft movements were a reaction to the experience of the War, and that they sought to reintroduce the freedom, vitality and spontaneity that industrialisation and Victorian religious and social conventions had suppressed.[228] But the three major Woodcraft movements had distinctly different characteristics and formative influences. The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry was essentially an elite, pre-War, intellectual movement. The Kibbo Kift (in its formative stages) was a reaction against nationalism, militarism and the War, but later it became highly disciplined and militaristic. Meanwhile, the Woodcraft Folk, like the broader mass outdoor movement, was in part a rebellion by the post-War generation against the War-generation. More importantly, the characteristics that Gillis ascribes to the Woodcraft movements – unconventional dress and uninhibited behaviour, pacifism, and a reputation for sexual immorality – applied to the hiking movement as a whole, not just to the Woodcraft movement.

[226] Paul, *Republic of Children*, 26-27.
[227] Gillis, 'Conformity and Rebellion'. Gillis, *Youth and History*.
[228] Trentmann, 'Civilization and Its Discontents'. D. Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments 1900-1945* (2000), 601.

Paul remained politically active during the 1930s, joining H.G. Wells, Cyril Joad, Bertrand Russell and others in the Federation of Progressive Societies, a coalition of the non-Marxist left, where he edited the monthly newsletter *Plan* from 1934 to 1938. But *Plan* lacked the vitality and companionship that had drawn him to the outdoor movement in the mid-1920s, and he soon became frustrated by the sterility of the debate.[229] When he wrote *The Folk Trail* in 1929 he dedicated it, not to socialism, but to the 'Wayfarers' Fellowship':

> This shall be a bond between us,
> That we are of one blood, you and I;
> That we have cried peace to all men,
> And claimed kinship with every living thing;
> That we hate war and sloth and greed and love fellowship
> And that we shall go singing to the fashioning of a new world.[230]

For Paul, the essence of the movement was 'the hard physical outdoor life of camp fires, singing, love-making, arguing and walking – the longing to live a kind of poetry'.[231] This is perhaps as close as it is possible to get to a contemporary articulation of the philosophy of the interwar outdoor youth movement. It was an ideal echoed by members of the post-War generation across the class divide:

> Cyclists and hikers in company, day excursionists,
> Refugees from cursed towns and devastated areas;
> Know you seek a new world, a saviour to establish
> Long-lost kinship and restore the blood's fulfilment…[232]

Reinterpreting the Hiking Craze as a Youth Movement

Academic literature on the outdoor movement is divided into two main schools of thought. The first ascribes the growth of the movement in the post-War years to neo-romanticism – disillusionment with modern civilisation and commercial consumerism. The second argues that the principal motivation of participants was ideological; a continuation of the struggle between the landed and the landless. Neither of these explanations satisfactorily explains the dramatic expansion of the outdoor movement during the five years from 1927 to 1932.

[229] Paul, *Angry Young Man*, 241.
[230] Paul, *Folk Trail*, 11.
[231] Paul, *Angry Young Man*, 68.
[232] 'You That Love England', from *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933) in C. Day Lewis, *Selected Poems* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2004), 58.

Some intellectuals in the 1930s sought to portray walking in the country as an activity that was irreconcilable with commercialised leisure. In Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), for example, Lenina rejects a walk through the sublime landscape of the Lake District with the young idealist Bernard Marx, in favour of watching the Women's Heavyweight Wrestling Championship and a half gramme of soma in a raspberry sundae.[233] But there is little evidence to suggest that young hikers saw a dichotomy between enjoying a walk in the country and enjoying the latest film or dance craze, or that the 'hiking craze' reflected an atavistic desire to go 'back-to-the-land'.

The most visible signifier of the 'hiker' was 'his raiment of many hues and his collection of the latest gadgets from the stores'.[234] Before the hiking craze, young males craved the adult status conferred by their first suit. As Mannheim observed, 'static [social and cultural] conditions make for attitudes of piety – the younger generation tends to adapt itself to the older, even to the point of making itself look older'.[235] In contrast, hikers proudly proclaimed their youth by wearing shorts. As Martin Green observed of several of the other 'youth crazes' in the interwar years, hiking was a deliberate violation of 'traditional limits of mature behaviour…a prolongation of adolescent styles into adult years' that inevitably attracted criticism and ridicule from 'outsiders'.[236] In 'The Ordeal' (1927), the writer compared walking to London Road Station in Manchester in his first pair of shorts to winning a medal in Flanders, while Joan Beale recalled that 'in those days girls did not wear shorts and we had several people stop their cars and take snaps of us. We also had abuse hurled at us for being hussies.'[237] As late as 1936, *Tramper and Cyclist* opined that girls wearing shorts 'look very well if they are trimly built, but it needs a "modernist" type of mind'.[238] While the official Scout uniform was military khaki, hikers emblazoned their version with brightly-coloured shirts, jumpers, scarves and berets. Like the deliberately unconventional *Wandervögel*, the hiking 'uniform' was a fashion statement; an opportunity for young clerks, shop-keepers and teachers to shrug-off the 'black-coated' respectability of their urban working lives.

Early editions of *Out-o'-Doors*, the first popular magazine aimed at the outdoor market, carried adverts for health foods, butterfly nets and botanical collecting cases. By the time that two competitors, *Hiker and Camper* and *Ruc-Sac*, appeared on the market in

[233] A. Huxley, *Brave New World*, 1977 Panther ed., 78 (first pubd.1932).
[234] Carr, *Complete Hiker and Camper*, 3, 5.
[235] Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', 302.
[236] Green, *Children of the Sun,* 218.
[237] 'The Ordeal', *OoD*, Sep. 1927; J. Beales, *Ah Happy Days!* (undated) YHA Archives 410006, 3.
[238] *T&C*, Jan. 1936, 5; See also *SCRH* 1928/29, 134-35.

1931, the adverts in all three magazines were for shorts, berets, rucksacks, tents, waterproofs, walking shoes, maps, chocolate bars and numerous other consumer products aimed at the outdoor enthusiast. Thomas Black produced an 88-page catalogue of camping and hiking gear, while Bukta offered a 96-page 'Campedia crammed full of just the sort of kit the hiker and camper needs'.

Illustration 16: Advert from *Out-o'-Doors*, 1932 (BL).

As Walsh observed in 1932: 'The gadget cranks are now being let loose on the hikers. Every disillusioned inventor of something or other has turned to hiking.'[239] In a 1934 article ironically subtitled 'The Romance of the £5,000,000 a Year Hiking Industry', Stephenson noted that 'a dozen years ago the purchase of a rucksack was no easy

[239] Walsh, *On the Hike*, 51.

matter…To-day there are very few towns where a rucksack cannot be obtained readily.'[240]

Ruc-Sac magazine, which was specifically targeted at young hikers, claimed to have a circulation of 50,000. The magazine included regular record reviews – 'What's What on the Camp Gramophone' – as well as film reviews, and a promotional letter sent out by the Advertising Manager suggested other consumer and leisure products that the readership might buy (see Illustration 17).

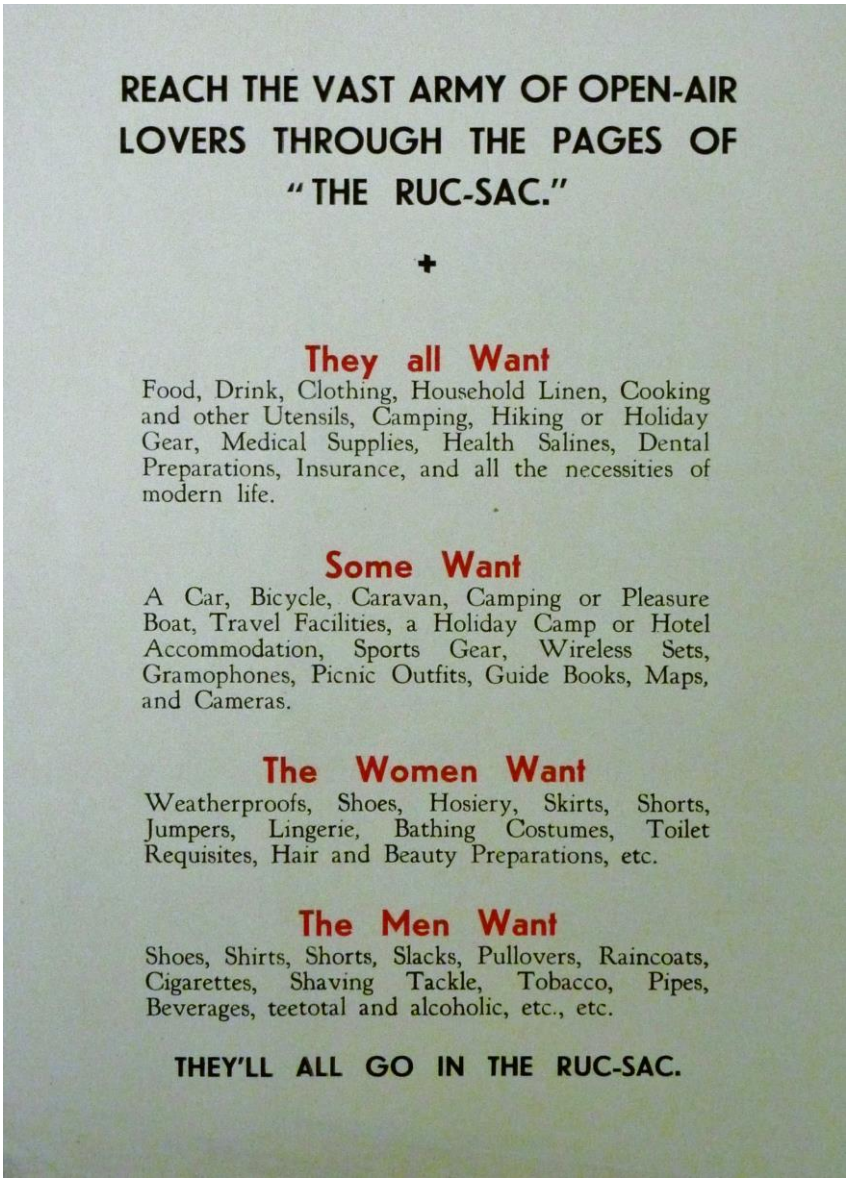

Illustration 17: Letter sent out by the Advertising Manager of *Ruc-Sac* in 1931 (BL).

[240] Stephenson, 'Walking to Prosperity', 14-15.

The mass outdoor movement was not a neo-romantic, anti-industrial rejection of modernity; it was a celebration of increasing wealth, mobility and consumer-choice. Far from being a protest against commercialised leisure, the huge initial success of the 'hiking craze' had much to do with Sabbatarian laws that prohibited other leisure activities on Sundays and the failure of the commercial sector to recognise the enormous potential of the youth market. Meanwhile, farmers' wives and rural publicans happily catered to the needs of hungry young hikers, serving tea, bread and butter, and ham and eggs in the convivial and noisy atmosphere of country pubs and cottages. As a student at the Regent Street Polytechnic observed in July 1931: 'Why is it we always think of the tea as one of the most enjoyable parts of a ramble?'[241]

Rejecting neo-romantic explanations, Taylor sought to redefine the substantive interwar outdoor movement 'in practical campaigning and politically significant terms'.[242] But campaigning for access is a second-order issue; it does not explain why people chose to go walking in the first place. Moreover, out of an estimated 500,000 recreational walkers in Britain in 1930, fewer than 40,000 were affiliated to any form of 'collaborative open-air interest' and of those just 10,000 were members of clubs affiliated to the Manchester and Sheffield Federations, which (as the leaders of those two Federations observed at the time), 'seem to be the only ones actively concerned with Access propaganda'.[243] The overwhelming majority of walkers took no part in any form of campaigning activity.

Both neo-romantic and ideological explanations for the mass outdoor movement place undue reliance upon the historical record left by middle-aged, middle-class intellectuals, social reformers, youth group leaders and committee-members of Ramblers' Federations, or equally exceptional working-class access campaigners. Meanwhile, they ignore the silent majority of walkers. In his book *Coming of Age* (1986), Springhall argued that 'it is about time that the historian began to move away from the institutions that interpret and claim to represent youth…into dealing with youth's own role in creating the social and cultural forms associated with that part of the life-cycle spanning childhood and adulthood'.[244] However, after devoting considerable attention to the emergence of adolescence as a distinct stage of life in Victorian and Edwardian England, Springhall's book leaps to the 1950s when, he claims, the concept of adolescence 'came of age' in the form of the Teddy Boy. He

[241] Chandra, *Polytechnic Rambling Club*, 24.
[242] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 1.
[243] Rickwood, 'Public Enjoyment of Open Countryside', 188; *Northern Rambler* June 1936, 97.
[244] Springhall, *Coming of Age,* 11.

gives almost no consideration to what happened in the interwar years, apart for a short section on juvenile crime.

As noted in Chapter 1, numerous contemporary commentators and a few general histories of the interwar years have recognised that the 'hiking craze' formed just part of an emerging youth culture. But the history of the outdoor movement has been appropriated by rural historians concerned with anti-industrialism and 'Englishness', or political historians concerned with class struggle, while historians interested in the evolution of youth culture have overlooked the outdoor movement because, despite being essentially an urban phenomenon, it largely took place within a rural setting.[245]

When historians have gone in search of youth movements in the interwar years, they have tended to focus on elite groups and institutions. Numerous books have been written about the treasure hunts and fancy dress parties of the 'bright young people' that revolved around the post-War generation of Oxford writers, poets and aesthetes.[246] Cambridge has attracted an equal amount of attention. In an article entitled *Youth in Britain* (1970), Arthur Marwick, declared that 'as a political and cultural phenomenon [youth] makes its first significant appearance on the British scene in the 1920s'. However, he then confined his study to Cambridge University.[247] In *Youth Culture in Modern Britain* (2008), David Fowler reached a very similar conclusion, stating that 'youth culture in twentieth-century Britain has a definite beginning around 1920' and locating that beginning in Cambridge.[248] The reason for Marwick and Fowler's interest in Cambridge was Rolf Gardiner (born 1902), who was editor during the 1920s of the Cambridge University magazine *Youth*.[249] Gardiner had been an enthusiastic Boy Scout while at school, and briefly joined the Kibbo Kift, before being drawn to rural revivalism and the *Blut und Boden* romanticism of the German youth movement. He believed in hiking *Wandervögel*-style, taking small groups of young men on long walks through the English countryside to the rhythm of marching songs, and later established an experimental work camp at Springhead Farm in Dorset, where he

[245] E.g. S. Todd, 'Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass* 4, 4 (2006), 715-30. See Anderson, 'Liberal Countryside?' 87.

[246] E.g. Taylor, *Bright Young People*; Green, *Children of the Sun*; Carpenter, *Brideshead Generation*.

[247] A. Marwick, 'Youth in Britain, 1920-1960: Detachment and Commitment', *JCH* 5, 1 (1970), 37.

[248] Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain,* ch.2.

[249] R. Gardiner, *World Without End: British Politics and the Younger Generation* (1932); A. Best, ed., *Water Springing From the Ground: An Anthology of the Writing of Rolf Gardiner* (Shaftsbury, 1972); R. J. Moore-Colyer, 'Back to Basics: Rolf Gardiner, H. J. Massingham and "A Kinship in Husbandry"', *RH* 12, 1 (2001), 85-108; R. J. Moore-Colyer, 'Rolf Gardiner, English Patriot and the Council for the Church and Countryside', *Agricultural History Review* 49, 2 (2002), 187-209; Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, ch. 3 and 4.

claimed that a combination of hard labour, folk music and Morris-dancing would form lasting bonds of friendship:[250]

> Behind all the husbandry and craftsmanship, using such things as music, drama and festival, stood sacramental ideas of worship and offering, as opposed to the etiolation of modern life by the decay of reverence and mystery…Four or five times a year we had work camps for young men. There were also a few young women but they were kept very much in their place…This vital fellowship was really a kind of monastery in action.[251]

Elitist, anti-modern, and dismissive of middle-class suburban culture and an interfering state, Gardiner believed that the salvation of England lay in a rural folk revival, led by aristocrats and yeoman farmers, like himself. His views were far closer to the middle-aged leaders of the elite preservationist movement, such as Clough Williams-Ellis, than they were to the emerging mass youth culture of the interwar years.

Likewise, the small and elite 'Ferguson's Gang' has attracted some academic interest, not least because of the eccentricity of its members. It too had links to the preservation movement but, unlike Gardiner's Springhead Ring, its membership consisted almost entirely of well-educated young women, who concealed their identities with masks, communicated in mock-cockney and adopted pseudonyms including Bill Stickers, Red Biddy, Sister Agatha and 'erb the Smasher.[252]

> We ain't so many – we ain't so few
> All of us has one end in view
> National Trust to work for you.
> Green grass turning brick and dust –
> Stately homes that will soon go bust –
> No defence but the National Trust.
> Looking at rural England thus –
> George and Dragon is changed for us,
> Into St Clough and the Octopus.[253]

Gang meetings tended to be riotous all-night affairs, accompanied by hampers of food and wine delivered by Fortnum & Mason. Like Gardiner's Springhead Ring, the numbers involved in Ferguson's Gang were tiny and it played almost no part in the development of mass youth culture.

[250] Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain*, ch.2.
[251] 'Prologue' in Best, ed., *Water Springing from the Ground*, 8.
[252] *National Trust Magazine*, Spring 2008; M. Waterson, *The National Trust: The First Hundred Years* (1994), 88; S. Herdman, 'The Cloaked Crusaders', *National Trust* 2008, 26.
[253] The last line refers to Clough Williams-Ellis and the CPRE.

Given the amount of attention given to these small, elite youth movements, it is perhaps surprising that the numerically far more significant, albeit more diffuse, hiking craze has not attracted more attention from social historians. There is no commonly accepted definition of a 'youth movement', but most historians implicitly appear to define it as a group or groups of young people who self-consciously belong to one birth cohort and who respond to a particular set of social and cultural conditions by rejecting all or some of the practices and values of their elders. Members of a youth movement form themselves into a recognisable social group by adopting a common code of behaviour or dress that is unconventional or rebellious, and this formative act binds the individuals together, becoming the basis for continuing practice.[254] Several commentators have noted the importance of the media in defining and diffusing mass youth culture. Stanley Cohen, for example, argues that press coverage gave a cohesiveness to the Mod culture of the early 1960s that would not have existed without such publicity.[255] Fowler agrees that 'the Mods were…the first geographically mobile, national youth movement that empowered thousands of youths and young females [sic]', but instead stresses the importance of travel and mobility, which 'offered excitement, opportunities to develop relationships with like-minded friends…the prospect of new experiences and contact with other social classes'.[256]

The 'hiking craze' appears to satisfy all of these criteria. Walker, who advocates a neo-romantic interpretation of the movement, nevertheless acknowledges that the demography of the outdoor movement shifted decisively in the interwar years 'towards individuals in their late teens and early twenties…who rejected the values and fashions of the previous generation'.[257] Despite his preoccupation with the campaigning function of the outdoor movement, Taylor concedes that the movement 'became, in effect, a self-generating youth cult'.[258] In 1959, even Marples identified a fundamental shift in the attitudes and behaviour of young walkers: 'There is no question they are enjoying themselves; but they probably appreciate few of the finer points of the art of walking as understood by such a connoisseur as [George] Trevelyan…Their pleasures are mainly physical, perhaps (without offence) one might say animal…They are revelling in the freedom from the restraints of urban life…Hiking…is a social activity.'[259] For the post-

[254] Mannheim, 'Problem of Generations', 288, 305. This definition overlaps with aspects of Hilborn and Bird's 'attitudinal' and 'behavioural' generations. See Jones, *Local Church and Generational Change*, 18.
[255] S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (1972), 34.
[256] Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain*, 3, 5, 8.
[257] Walker, 'Popularization of the Outdoor Movement', 141.
[258] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 237.
[259] Marples, *Shank's Pony*, 133, 182.

War generation, rebelling against the exclusive War experience and conservative domesticity of their parents, hiking provided what psychologist Marilynn Brewer terms 'optimal distinctiveness': an activity that satisfies both the need for community, belonging and affiliation, and a sense of differentiated individuality; a balance of inclusion and uniqueness.[260]

There was, and still is, wide agreement among both contemporary commentators and historians that the *Wandervögel*, the pre-War German outdoor movement, was a youth movement. As an article in the Cambridge University magazine *Youth* noted in 1926: 'No-one asks: "Is there a German Youth Movement?"'[261] The main difference between interpretations of the *Wandervögel* and of the British outdoor movement appears to be that, while British historians have sought to pigeon-hole the outdoor movement as either a resurgence of romanticism, or a political movement, historians of the German outdoor youth movement have adopted a more nuanced approach, perhaps because of the importance of understanding the subsequent militarisation of the movement in the post-War years.

In his classic study, Walter Laqueur acknowledges that the German youth movement was rooted in the German Romantic tradition, but argues that it did not regard romanticism as an end in itself. Equally, participants had a social conscience and wanted to change German society, particularly German youth, for the better, but they were generally apolitical and lacked a central moral idea, or a common ideological framework. According to Laqueur, what they valued above all else was character: sincerity, decency, open-mindedness; a rejection of artificiality, conventionality, snobbery and affectation. The movement was a reaction to an adult world lacking 'vitality, warmth, emotion and ideals'.[262]

As Laqueur acknowledged:

> The authentic and deepest experience of the youth movement is difficult to describe and perhaps impossible to analyse, [but] the experience of walking at twilight and at sunrise, the atmosphere of the camp fire, the friendships that sprang up…the genuineness of this experience cannot be doubted.[263]

[260] M. B. Brewer, 'The Importance of Being *We*: Human Nature and Intergroup Relations', *American Psychologist,* 62 (2007), 726-38.
[261] *Youth*, Nov.1926, quoted in Marwick, 'Youth in Britain', 41.
[262] Laqueur, *Young Germany,* 228-37, 4.
[263] Ibid., 19.

The same nebulous, but nevertheless deeply felt, experiences underpinned the rapid expansion of the interwar British mass outdoor movement. Hiking was first and foremost a youth movement. It was companionable, energetic, idealistic, but essentially apolitical and escapist. Hikers were escaping from drab urban surroundings, but they were also escaping from adult control, domesticity, snobbery and affectation. As the geo-political situation deteriorated during the 1930s, many were also escaping from a society that was increasingly preoccupied by an intense feeling of foreboding. In 1938, Wainwright went on a long walk through the Pennines, but the prospect of war constantly intervened: 'News and conversations became concentrated on the single topic…The talk was of aid raid shelters, fire drill, civil defence…In the solitude of the wild Pennine hills, I found peace. On those desolate moors, war seemed incongruous.' At the end of the holiday, Wainwright felt like 'a deserter going back, with a feeling of guilt'.[264] As David Thomson observes, throughout the interwar period, a 'sense of helplessness and drift...may explain the escapist flavour of most fashionable cults. What appealed was "getting away from it all".'[265]

[264] A. Wainwright, *A Pennine Journey: A Story of a Long Walk in 1938* (1986), vii, 213.
[265] D. Thomson, *England in the Twentieth Century* (Harmondsworth, 1965), 181.

Chapter 6

The Youth Hostels Association

Illustration 18: Hostellers posing on a haystack next to the youth hostel at Wallington Hall, on Sir Charles Trevelyan's estate in Northumberland, 1932 (YHA).

The YHA was the greatest institutional achievement of the interwar outdoor movement, representing a remarkable, largely voluntary, collaboration between its three major strands. By the end of the 1930s, the Association proudly described itself as 'the largest "out of doors" organization and one of the largest youth organizations in the country'.[1] A 1938 *YHA Rucksack* editorial speculated that 'perhaps the historian of the future…may write of a Youth movement which began in England in 1930, and so educated its own membership, and the rest of the country, that in the middle of the twentieth century a great change took place – followed by free access to mountains, national parks, and an end to litter, beastliness and destruction of beauty'.[2] Written at the time of the Munich Crisis, much of this must have seemed like wishful thinking, but in fact the YHA played an influential role in the achievement of at least some of these objectives after the Second World War.

[1] YHA AR (1938), 6.
[2] *YHAR* (1938), 6, 4, 85.

The YHA is the best documented manifestation of the mass outdoor movement, but it is important to reiterate that its membership was *not* representative of the movement as a whole, since many younger and poorer hikers (particularly the unemployed) could not afford to stay in hostels. During the 1930s, its honorary officers and Executive Committee members were leading figures from the pre-War tramping and rambling movements, all of whom had been brought up in the Victorian era, while the membership overwhelmingly consisted of the post-War generation of hikers and cyclists. The YHA therefore provides an important test for the hypothesis that the youthful participants in the interwar mass outdoor movement absorbed and assimilated the culture and values of their older leaders.

The YHA has two semi-official histories: Oliver Coburn's *Youth Hostel Story* (1950) and Helen Maurice-Jones and Lindsey Porter's *The Spirit of YHA* (2008).[3] More recently, Duncan Simpson has produced a thoughtful insider's account of the Association's history.[4] Numerous historians have discussed the YHA in the context of the social history of the 1930s. Most have characterised it as an instrument of adult social control – in effect, a continuation of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tradition of adult-led youth movements – rather than as a manifestation of an emerging youth culture. Taylor devotes just three pages to the YHA, perhaps because the organization provides little supporting evidence for his thesis that the core activity of the outdoor movement was campaigning for access. He argues that the YHA was essentially a continuation of the CHA and the HF's mission to promote 'rational recreation'.[5] Walker gives a fuller account, but the only contemporary commentary on the Association that she offers consists of quotes from Ward (born 1876) whose views were more representative of the pre-War generation of ramblers.[6] Howkins notes that 'considerable initial support [for the YHA] came from religious and philanthropic bodies for whom it was another in the long series of attempts to divert the energies of a potentially troublesome working class';[7] Lowerson argues that the YHA was concerned with 'social control and rational recreation';[8] Wright speaks of the 'proletarian taming Youth Hostels Association';[9] while Matless maintains that preservationists, 'worried by the Bolshie BWSF found a more tractable youth movement in

[3] Coburn, *Youth Hostel Story*; Maurice-Jones and Porter, *Spirit of YHA*; and *Eighty Years of Youth Hostelling* (Matlock, 2010). See also L. Porter, *On Spartan Lines: Early Years of the YHA* (Ashbourne, 1992); D. Moir, *Youth Hostelling in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1944); A. Beith, *Youth Hostelling in Scotland: The First Twenty Five Years* (Edinburgh, 1959).
[4] D. M. Simpson, *Open to All: How Youth Hostels Changed the World* (FeedaRead.com, 2016).
[5] Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, 251-54.
[6] Walker, 'Outdoor Movement', 236-54.
[7] Howkins and Lowerson, 'Trends in Leisure', 51.
[8] Lowerson and Howkins, 'Leisure in the Thirties', 74.
[9] Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 50.

the YHA'.[10] All of these interpretations appear to be based upon a relatively superficial understanding of the objectives of the leadership and, with the exception of the two official histories and Simpson's book, almost no attempt has been made to examine the motives, values and behaviour of the youth hostellers themselves.

The YHA was modelled on the *Deutsche Jugendherbergen* (DJH), founded by the German school-teacher Richard Schirrmann in 1909. The DJH expanded rapidly in the early interwar years, reaching 2,320 hostels and 4.2 million bednights by 1932.[11] The following year the DJH merged with the Hitler Youth Movement, and in 1937 it withdrew from the International Federation of Youth Hostels. During the 1920s, however, 'an increasing number of young English men and women [were] making use of [the DJH] to spend their holiday in Germany, and on their return they always [asked] why something of the kind cannot be done at home'.[12]

By the late 1920s, a number of initiatives were underway to establish a similar network of hostels in Britain. In Scotland, the Scottish Young Men's Holiday Fellowship, supported by the YMCA and the Scouts, set up a chain of basic lodges in 1926, while the Scottish Rucksack Club, backed by the West of Scotland Ramblers' Federation, established two huts in 1929. The Northumbrian Trampers' Guild, with Charles Trevelyan as chairman, opened six bunkhouses in the North East in 1928, and in London, Barclay Baron helped to establish the Wayfarers' Hostels Association in 1929. The most significant developments, however, were taking place on Merseyside, where Tom Fairclough and Alf Embleton of the Liverpool Ramblers' Federation, with support from Arthur Leonard, the British Youth Council and others, established the British Youth Hostels Association (BYHA) in December 1929. The Rev. Henry Symonds (born 1885), headmaster of the Liverpool Institute, was appointed as its first chairman. In 1930, the National Council of Social Service convened a meeting in London to facilitate the transformation of this local initiative into a nationwide association.[13] The name was changed first to the Youth Hostels Association (Great Britain) and then to the Youth Hostels Association (England and Wales), following the refusal of the Scottish Youth Hostels Association, founded on 13 February 1931, to recognise the YHA (GB) as its parent body.[14]

[10] Matless, 'Art of Right Living', 98.
[11] B. Baron, 'How Hostels Began', *YHAR* (1936), 4, 1, 10.
[12] YHA Booklet, Aug.1930 (Y400003).
[13] NCSS Conference on Youth Hostels, 10 Apr.1930. CHAA, ADM/12/10.
[14] The SYHA accused the English of acting with 'self-conscious peninsularity'. SYHA AR (1931), 3.

By Easter 1931, twelve hostels had opened in England and Wales, including a chain of four located a day's walk apart that enabled hikers from Liverpool to walk from Birkenhead across North Wales to the Idwal Cottage Youth Hostel in the heart of Snowdonia. By 1932, the number of hostels had increased to 120 in England and Wales and 19 in Scotland, and the number of members had reached 9,873 and 3,876 respectively. By 1939 the YHA had 333 hostels and 83,418 members and the SYHA had 64 hostels and 18,720 members.[15] The achievement is all the more remarkable for taking place against the backdrop of the worst economic depression in the twentieth century. Barclay Baron, who became the first chairman of the Executive Committee of the YHA, noted in 1932 that

> we could not have chosen a time more difficult for the start of a movement which demands the time and thought and money of those who believe in it…But we can also claim that we know of no time which has cried louder for the kind of service our movement tries to give. The Y.H.A. is a happy child of its restless and anxious age.[16]

The YHA sought sponsorship and patronage from a range of supporters. Over forty organizations attended meetings to establish the Association in 1929 and 1930, including adult-led youth movements (the Boy Scouts and the Kibbo Kift); outdoor and holiday associations (the CHA, the HF, Ramblers' Federations, the Camping Club, the Cyclists' Touring Club, the National Cyclists' Union and the Workers' Travel Association); religion (Toc H, YMCA); education (the National Union of Students, various teachers' unions, and the School Journey Association); preservation (the CPRE); social reform (Toynbee Hall); and several 'progressive' causes (including the Sunlight League and the Theosophists). Of the 'senior' mountaineering clubs, only the FRCC sought affiliation. An article in the 1932 *FRCC Journal* suggests the generally disapproving attitude of the mountaineering establishment towards young hostellers: 'Since the inauguration of the Youth Hostels movement, the crowd of young hikers through the Lake District has increased enormously. Parties of fantastically irresponsible young scramblers have been met on the crags.'[17]

The YHA benefitted from a surplus of cheap rural property created by the agricultural depression. Many landowners, including the National Trust, willingly leased buildings on low rents to be converted into hostels. Early financial donors included the HF and the Workers' Travel Association. Quaker foundations, notably the Cadbury and the Rowntree

[15] Porter, *On Spartan Lines; SYHA Handbooks* 1931-39.
[16] B. Baron, *YHAR* (1932), 1, 1, 2.
[17] *FRCCJ* (1932), 9, 2, 210.

family trusts, also played a prominent role in supporting the movement.[18] In 1931, the Carnegie Trust donated £8,000 to the YHA and £2,000 to the SYHA, thereby placing both associations on a firm financial footing. The YHA also received some government support.

Ramsay MacDonald contributed an article to the first edition of the *YHA Rucksack* in 1932, in which he discussed the merits of a good frying pan, and wrote the foreword to the 1932 *SYHA Handbook*, where he described himself as an 'old tramp'. Not to be outdone, Stanley Baldwin wrote a Foreword to the 1936 *YHA Handbook*, and even President Roosevelt sent greetings to youth hostellers in 1938. The YHA also received royal patronage. Edward, Prince of Wales, opened Derwent Hall youth hostel in Derbyshire in June 1932, expressing the hope that 'people should be able to get tramping holidays away from the atmosphere of our big cities…particularly… those who are forced to live dreary lives.'[19] The King George V Jubilee Fund also provided some funding. But despite its dependence upon government and other organizations for financial support, the YHA defended its independence vigorously, keeping both campaigning and commercial interests at arms' length. An offer by the British and Foreign Bible Society to present a Bible to each hostel was declined; so too was an offer from Lord Rothermere to build a 'Daily Mail Hostel'.[20]

At the suggestion of Rolf Gardiner, George Trevelyan was approached to become the first president of the new Association.[21] Arthur Leonard (founder of the CHA and HF) had been an active supporter from the outset and was invited to be the first vice president. The Executive Committee sought five further vice presidents to represent what they considered to be the main constituencies of the new Association: Patrick Abercrombie, Hon. Secretary of the CPRE, agreed to represent 'preservation'; William Temple, the Archbishop of York, agreed to represent 'religion'; and George Gater, the Education Officer for London, agreed to represent 'education'. Sir George Newman ('health') and Sir John Masefield ('nature and literature') both declined.[22]

The president and vice presidents represented an essentially Victorian view of the world. Trevelyan (born 1876) was a member of a long-established intellectual, Liberal, landowning family with estates in Northumberland and Warwickshire covering 11,000

[18] Several Rowntree family members were active in the 'Quaker Tramps' before the War. John Cadbury became chairman of the YHA in 1939. See Freeman, 'Fellowship, Service and the "Spirit of Adventure"', 74, 80.

[19] *YHAR* (1932), 1 1, 4; *SYHA Handbook* (1932), 3; *YHA Handbook* (1936), 5; *YHAR* (1938), 6, 1, 9; YHAA 430001.

[20] YHA ExCo 2 Dec. 1933; 18 Mar. 1931.

[21] ExCo minutes 2 Nov. 1930.

[22] ExCo minutes 20/21 Sep. 1930.

acres. In addition to being an historian, he was a former member of the Sunday Tramps, a close friend and frequent guest at Young's Pen-y-Pass gatherings, and an energetic supporter of the National Trust.[23] His elder brother, Sir Charles, was a Liberal and later Labour MP, President of the Board of Education, and an active campaigner for access to open country, introducing the 1908 and 1926 Access to Mountains Bills. The Trevelyan family helped to establish the Northumberland Trampers' Guild and opened a bunkhouse on the family estate at Wallington Hall two years before the first youth hostel was opened. The Guild subsequently merged with the YHA, becoming the Northumberland and Tyneside Region in 1931 (see Illustration 18).

Richard Evans describes Trevelyan as

> a patrician who looked back nostalgically to the ordered world of the eighteenth century in which his own class, the landed gentry, had held sway, and he loathed the industrial revolution and the age of the masses. His paternalistic and condescending stance towards the lower orders in history is the main reason why he is no longer read today.[24]

This is an over-simplification. Whilst Trevelyan's attitudes were undoubtedly patrician and romantic, he nevertheless worked energetically to support organizations that sought to preserve the countryside for the benefit of all:

> As beauty-preserving landlords are taxed out of control of their properties, the only force at all capable of defending 'amenity' against the Philistines is the democratic movement for holidays in unspoilt country, of which the vigour of the Youth Hostels Association is a symptom.[25]

Even Beatrice Webb, often a harsh critic of people with whom she disagreed, conceded that 'George Trevelyan…now a convinced Conservative, is the only one of the three brothers who has given handsomely to the public causes in which he believes'.[26] Trevelyan was an austere man whose vision for the YHA was both aesthetic and ascetic:

> The Youth Hostel spirit…is social in that it brings together walkers and cyclists in fellowship with a minimum of restriction. But, most of all, it contributes to the service of beauty – not only the outward beauty of our national heritage, for which

[23] D. Cannadine, *G. M. Trevelyan: A Life in History* (1992). The joint presidents of the SHYA, Lord Edward Salvesen and Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, chairman of the Forestry Commission, were equally patrician figures.
[24] R. J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (1997), 163.
[25] G. M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography and Other Essays* (1949), 41.
[26] MacKenzie, eds., *Diary of Beatrice Webb*, 11 Apr.1935.

> we in this generation have to be the vigilant trustees, but the inward beauty, which in words 'depends on simplicity' – I mean the true simplicity of a rightly and nobly ordered mind and character.[27]

An article in the *Daily News* in 1929 reported that the YHA wanted to create 'somewhere young people can go and be free to talk and think in their own way. The idea is to live simply and to tramp about, to sleep on a palliasse rather than a bed and to use enameled mugs and plates rather than china.'[28] Whilst Trevelyan's ascetic craving for enameled mugs may have seemed perverse to some poorer members, his idealistic spirit suffused the young Association and he appears to have been an inspirational leader, telling volunteers that their 'prosaic efforts' were for an end that is 'poetic and religious'; that 'talk of sheets and stoves' enabled thousands of young people to see 'the starlight and the mountains'.[29]

Abercrombie (born 1879) was the first professor of Civic Design and Town Planning in Britain, at Liverpool University, and a founding member of the CPRE. He maintained a home in London, but travelled regularly to Liverpool, which in the late 1920s was at the forefront of developments in the outdoor movement. As a result, he was more sympathetic to the views of the northern outdoor movement than many other members of the preservation movement. Nevertheless, he probably lent his support to the YHA primarily because he saw the nascent organization as a means of educating the young in the proper use of the countryside.[30] As discussed in Chapter 3, the 'Country Code', which appeared in various forms during the 1930s, was the CPRE's attempt to provide rules of conduct for 'the untutored townsman' visiting the countryside for the first time. The Code was actively promoted by the YHA.

William Temple (born 1881), Archbishop of York, was appointed to represent 'religion'. Temple's family was at the very heart of the Victorian establishment (his father was Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was subsequently appointed to the same position in 1942) but in many respects he was the most radical honorary officer of the YHA. His presence on the Committee was designed to counter the opposition of Sabbatarians and other guardians of public morality who objected to young, single men and women sharing accommodation, but Temple was more concerned with education and social reform. A former president of the Workers' Travel Association and member of the Labour party,

[27] *B&MRFH* (1932).
[28] *Daily News*, 28 Sep. 1929.
[29] G. M. Trevelyan, 'This Lovely Earth', *YHAR* (1933),1, 3, 35.
[30] See Matless, 'Art of Right Living' and 'Moral Geographies'.

Temple's 1942 Penguin Special *Christianity and Social Order*, which discussed faith and socialism, sold 140,000 copies.[31]

Throughout his life Temple was an advocate of education and welfare as a means of promoting social justice and fellowship. Earlier in his career, when he was appointed headmaster of Repton, he advised his predecessor that public schools 'seemed to me to reproduce our class-divisions in accentuated form…I should hope…to find ways of moving towards a system that would tend to diminish them.' His instincts on political issues such as access and preservation were equally radical. Temple told a mass meeting held in the Albert Hall on 27 September 1942, that

> I am not at all persuaded that the right way to deal with [the assertion that public amenity is subordinate to the interests of private landowners] is by nationalisation of the land, but I am quite sure that we need to assert the prior interest of the community in respect to land and water with a vigour of which our recent political history shows no trace.[32]

A cartoon in the London *Evening Standard* in 1943 showed Temple surrounded by open country labelled 'Economic Fields', while a gamekeeper, with a fierce dog straining at its leash, points to a 'Trespassers will be Prosecuted' notice with his stick. The caption reads: 'Here, sir, don't you know you're on private property?'

A portly man who suffered from gout, Temple nevertheless knew the Lake District intimately, where he was often to be seen wearing a faded Norfolk jacket with sandwiches sticking out of one pocket and maps from another. Like Trevelyan, Temple believed in the spiritual value of walking but he also hoped that the YHA would contribute to his vision of social justice: 'To recover a sense of beauty of nature is to recover sanity and peace...youth hostels...[are a] contribution to our social and spiritual welfare. The problems of our hectic civilisation may yet be solved by walkers.'[33]

George Gater (born 1886) was the least prominent of the vice presidents in outdoor circles, rarely speaking in public or writing about the YHA. Educated at New College, Oxford, he was appointed Director of Education for Nottinghamshire in 1911 but volunteered to serve in the army at the start of the War. Within three years, including

[31] S. Spencer, *William Temple: A Calling to Prophecy* (2001) 62, 18, 23, 68.
[32] Quoted in RA Access Sub-Committee Meeting, 10 Oct.1942 (RA4287/02/008/3).
[33] *YHA Handbook* (1934), quoted in Maurice-Jones and Porter, *Spirit of YHA*, 95.

service at the Somme and Gallipoli, he had risen to the rank of Brigadier-General.[34] He was later knighted for services as Clerk to the London County Council.

Leonard (born 1864) was the eldest member of the Council at 66. His forceful character and reputation as the 'father of the open-air movement' ensured that many of the precepts and practices of the CHA and the HF – a ban on alcohol and gambling; communal 'duties', such as sweeping dormitories, washing up, peeling potatoes, chopping wood or carrying water; and lights out and silence by 10:30 pm – would be adopted by the YHA until the 1980s. However, unlike the CHA and the HF, youth hostellers were free to do as they wished during the day and in the evening and, as discussed below, the social ambience of youth hostels was entirely different from CHA and HF guest houses.

Barclay Baron (born 1884), first chairman of the YHA Executive Committee, was a member of a Quaker family and son of the Lord Mayor of Bristol.[35] Educated at University College, Oxford, he was a contemporary of William Temple and Clement Attlee and, like them, volunteered to work at a Boys' Club run by the Oxford & Bermondsey Mission before the War.[36] After travelling and studying in Germany he returned to London and became warden of the Mission in 1911. Declared unfit for active service, Baron worked for the YMCA and Toc H in France during the War, before acting as chairman of the YHA from 1930 to 1937. Together with Henry Weston, General Secretary of the CHA, Baron drew up the association's constitution and recruited Jack Catchpool, also a Quaker and former warden of Toynbee Hall, as Hon. Secretary. By common consent, Catchpool was the driving force behind the new Association.

In an article in *The Spectator*, Baron set out his vision for the YHA.[37] He described it as 'a spiritual movement in the widest sense', stating that the objectives of the Association included 'strenuous leisure and the enjoyment and preservation of the countryside'. The article emphasised that the YHA intended to impose the minimum of rules, relying instead upon a sense of community and mutual tolerance:

> It will seek to establish a high standard of behaviour based upon esprit de corps…The founders of the movement hope that it will promote a better understanding between the younger people of various classes and subsequently

[34] www.21stdivision1914-18.org (4 Jan. 2015).
[35] M. Snape, ed., *The Back Parts of the War: The YMCA Memoirs and Letters of Barclay Baron* (2009), ch.1.
[36] The Mission ran a rambling club, which was a founding member of the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs in 1905.
[37] *Spectator*, 6 June 1931, 4.

> help to bring the youth of our nation into close contact with the youth of other nations.

The emphasis on internationalism and pacifism increased as the political situation in Europe worsened. In the 1933 *YHA Handbook*, Hugh Walpole speculated that 'it would be a fine thing if Mussolini, Hitler, Ramsay MacDonald and M. Herroit could walk for a fortnight together, using hostels as they go'.[38] An editorial in the *YHA Rucksack* in 1935 acknowledged that

> today there is more fear in the world than hope…Yet the success of the Youth Hostels Movement should encourage our faint hearts…These hostels may be to modern Europe what the Universities were to the Middle Ages…Youth Hostels may…be a nursery of a true League of Nations.[39]

The comparison with universities is not entirely fanciful. While historians have scrutinised the small student population (particularly of Oxford and Cambridge) for signs of an emerging youth culture in the interwar years, they have largely overlooked the YHA, which created for a much larger segment of the population a social space that was, in some respects, quite similar to a university hall of residence.[40] In 1939, Alastair Borthwick pursued the same idea, describing youth hostels as 'the greatest library of ideas and human experience'.[41]

Most hostellers appear to have shared the internationalist and pacifist outlook of their leaders but ironically, as war looked increasingly inevitable, the British government recognised that fit, young hikers, experienced in map-reading and moving over rough ground, would make excellent soldiers. In 1937, the National Fitness Council offered grants amounting to £8,500 to open or improve fourteen hostels. Initially the Executive Committee was concerned about government interference (no doubt reflecting on the expropriation of the DJH by the Nazis just five years earlier), but as no conditions were attached they decided to accept the grants. The funding was supplemented with an interest-free loan of £10,000 in 1939.[42]

The morality of hostelling posed a particular challenge for the leadership. Trevelyan had expressed concerns about this issue before accepting the presidency, but was apparently

[38] H. Walpole, *YHA Handbook* (1933), 5.
[39] *YHA Handbook* (1935), 9.
[40] In 1938, just 1.7% of the population went to university. Halsey, ed., *Trends in British Society*.
[41] Borthwick, *Always a Little Further*, 133.
[42] S. G. Jones, 'State Intervention in Sport and Leisure in Britain between the Wars', *JCH* 22, 1 (1987) 163-82.

persuaded by Catchpool's argument that 'if suitable accommodation is not found for them, [young people] will sleep under haystacks, etc. It is therefore our duty to provide the needed accommodation and thus minimise the difficulties.'[43] The Executive Committee 'felt there was no need for anxiety', but nevertheless agreed that enquirers were to be told that 'the matter was receiving the earnest consideration of the Committee and that every care would be taken to ensure right behaviour'.[44] The press did indeed make enquiries. The *Daily Herald* reported on 'the temptations involved in the new craze for young unmarried couples taking hiking holidays together, and not confining their attention to the improvement in physical health derived from such open-air excursions'.[45] Before setting out to visit a hostel in 1931, a reporter from the *Birmingham Post* confessed that 'all my friends seemed to have the idea that youth hostels were not for *nice* people'. The hostel warden soon put him straight: 'Only nice girls and boys – idealistic girls and boys – feel the urge to tour the country either on bicycles or on their own legs. The other sort are too soft and indolent.'[46]

In 1936, the Rev. Dick Sheppard, a prominent peace campaigner and close ally of Temple, wrote an article in the *YHA Rucksack* entitled 'Is Hiking Morally Dangerous?' prompted by parents concerned about sons or daughters taking up the activity.[47] He concluded that it was not: 'I'll admit right away that, when young men and girls go hiking together, they may find opportunities for immorality. But these won't tempt anyone who doesn't want to be tempted.'[48] Nevertheless, temptation clearly existed. Catchpool maintained that the hostel common room was 'an infinitely better place than the street corner for boys and girls to get to know each other and to find out how well they were suited'.[49] Humphrey Gillett, a young hosteller, agreed, noting that 'Youth Hostels were a good mating ground'.[50] Like the CHA and HF before it, the YHA soon acquired a sobriquet – 'Your Husband Assured'.[51]

The YHA was emphatically not conceived as a campaigning organization. Trevelyan was quite clear that he saw the activities of the CPRE, the NT and the YHA as complementary

[43] YHA ExCo, 20/21 Sep.1930.
[44] ExCo minutes 30 Sep. 1930.
[45] *Daily Herald*, 3 May 1931.
[46] *Birmingham Post*, 15 June 1931.
[47] *YHAR* (1936), 4, 4, 81.
[48] Sheppard's views were not shared by the vicar of Hathersage, in the Peak District, who accused hikers of blasphemy and immoral behaviour in an article in the *Manchester Guardian* on 19 Apr. 1933.
[49] E. S. J. Catchpool, *Candles in the Darkness* (1966), 146.
[50] S. Humphries and P. Gordon, *A Man's World: From Boyhood to Manhood 1900-1960* (1996), 156.
[51] E.g. See A. Truby, *Miles and Milestones: Recollections of Forty Years of Youth Hostelling*, 1979, 30, (Y400104).

but different: 'The CPRE and the National Trust, the saviours of the countryside, march hand in hand with the YHA, the user of the countryside.'[52] In the early years (1930-34), there is hardly any mention of other associations in the minutes of the Executive Committee or the National Council (the annual meeting bringing together representatives of the Regions and affiliated organizations). However, from around 1935, the YHA began to adopt a more proactive stance on a number of issues, including preservation and access. The YHA was granted *ex officio* representation on the Councils of the CPRE and the CPRW, while the SYHA was affiliated to the APRS. In 1934 the YHA joined a Joint Committee of Open-Air Organisations, which brought together representatives of the National Council of Ramblers' Federations, the Camping Club, the CHA and the HF to campaign for the interests of walkers and campers.[53] Using funding provided by the YHA, it was this Committee that hired the Central Hall, Westminster, in 1935, to relaunch the campaign for National Parks, independently of the CPRE.[54] As discussed in Chapter 3, the CPRE prevented a schism within the preservation movement by seizing control of the resulting Standing Committee on National Parks, but the late withdrawal of the resolution calling upon the prime minister to receive a deputation from the Open-Air Organisations highlighted the growing rift between the upper-middle-class preservation movement and the mass outdoor movement, of which the YHA was a part.[55] In an article entitled 'A Splendidly Intentioned Meeting That Went Awry', the editor of *Tramper and Cyclist* reported on the conference:

> The large attendance from rambling clubs, …the Holiday Fellowship, camping clubs, hostel associations…boy scouts associations, the Woodcraft Folk, camp fire girls and similar bodies, betokened genuine deep-seated interest [in National Parks].

However, after the resolution had been withdrawn, the magazine noted that

> the meeting…seemed in a mysterious way…to have passed from the hands of the conveners to other hands…The speakers…quite missed the whole purpose of…National Parks. [They] are not intended for the pleasure chiefly of well-to-do

[52] G. M. Trevelyan, 'Men and Mountains', *YHAR* (1936), 4, 3, 49.
[53] The SYHA declined, on the grounds that 'it would be extremely unwise…to form part of a Council proposing to take political action'. SYHA ExCo 29 Oct. 1932.
[54] Conference of Open-Air Organisations minutes 30 Nov.1935 (RA 02/500).
[55] See page 107.

> persons, mildly interested in natural history or beautiful scenery but for the whole…community.[56]

While the CPRE succeeded in retaining overall control of the campaign for National Parks, the composition of the Standing Committee gave greater representation to the interests of the outdoor movement than might otherwise have been the case. In addition to Abercrombie, the committee included Jim Southern, co-founder of the (London) Federation of Rambling Clubs and the Rev. Henry Symonds, one of the founders of the YHA and a member of the National Council of Ramblers' Federations.[57] When John Dower's report, *The Case for National Parks in Great Britain* (1938), was published, George Trevelyan provided the introduction. Echoing the pantheistic philosophy of fellow-Sunday Tramp George Meredith (whose biography he had written in 1906), Trevelyan argued that 'without sight of the beauty of nature the spiritual power of the British people will be atrophied', and described natural beauty as 'the highest common denominator in the spiritual life of to-day'.[58]

The leadership of the YHA also maintained cordial, but not close, ties with various interwar rural revivalist and adult-led youth movements. The Kibbo Kift was affiliated to the YHA; Aubrey Westlake, of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, wrote an article for *YHA Rucksack* on 'Grith Fyrd', a 'back-to-the-land' experiment for unemployed workers; Rolf Gardiner wrote a piece on Springhead Farm; and Henry Massingham contributed an article on 'Back-to-Nature', advocating a new partnership between the land and those living on it.[59] In 1937, the *YHA Rucksack* also published an article from the leader of Ferguson's Gang.[60] Claiming to be a fragment of a medieval romance, the article started: 'In those days it fell out that there came up an Octopus out of the Sea of Speculation and wrought foul damage in the fields and woods, to wit by infecting the whole land with Red Blight'. The 'Lady of Rural England' duly summoned knights to slay the Octopus. After various knights (who passed resolutions and wrote letters to *The Times*) had failed, the Knight of the National Trust helped by a Good Youth drove the Octopus from the land. Next to the article, the National Trust inserted an appeal seeking to recruit YHA members as 'associates' (which granted them free admission to Trust properties, but not the right to vote at meetings) for a subscription fee of 2s. 6d. The scheme ultimately attracted 1,200 new members, at a time when the total membership of the National Trust amounted to just

[56] *T&C*, Jan. 1936, 22-3.
[57] Standing Committee on National Parks minutes, 26 May 1936 (RA 02/500).
[58] Standing Committee on National Parks, *The Case for National Parks in Great Britain*.
[59] *YHAR* (1934), 2, 2, 21; (1934) 2, 3, 35; and (1935), 3, 3, 45.
[60] *YHAR* (1937), 5, 1, 2.

2,300, and helped to start the National Trust on its gradual transition from a small, elite society into a mass-membership organization.[61]

All of these initiatives were broadly in line with the leaders' stated objective of promoting the enjoyment and preservation of the countryside. Perhaps because of its dependence upon the goodwill of large landowners, the YHA initially adopted a lower profile in relation to access to open country in England and Wales, and Hayden Lorimer argues that the SYHA was even more quiescent in the debate about Access to Mountains in Scotland, which he ascribes to the strong influence of the landowning and metropolitan elite within the Scottish Association.[62] In England and Wales, the Ramblers' Association became increasingly impatient, particularly as membership of the YHA rapidly exceeded the number of Ramblers. In 1937, the *Ramblers' Association Gazette* complained that 'the Youth Hostels Association, with 50,000 members all using the open country for their recreation, has perhaps not been conspicuous so far in the championship of popular rights and claims, or in organising and educating the opinion of its large membership'.[63] The leadership of the YHA acknowledged the Ramblers' point, but believed that hostellers should make up their own minds on the issue. Leonard (who was chairman of the Ramblers' Association as well as being a vice president of the YHA) wrote an article in the *YHA Rucksack* drawing members' attention to the work of the Commons Society, the PD&NCFPS and the Ramblers' Association.[64] The following year, the YHA pledged its support for the creation of a 'Pennine Way', an idea originally proposed by Tom Stephenson in 1935, and Trevelyan wrote an article hoping that the Creech Jones Access to Mountains Bill would 'end peacefully an old controversy'.[65] Stephenson wrote to Morton in November 1938, claiming that he had 'succeeded in getting the National Executive of the Y.H.A. to pass a resolution in favour of access much to the surprise of some old members'.[66] Ward also sensed a change in attitude:

> It is gratifying that last Autumn, the Y.H.A. recovered from that disease of 'don't touch politics'…In the earliest years of this post-war subsidised movement…it

[61] D. M. Matheson 'The YHA and the National Trust', *YHAR* (1937), 5, 1, 14.
[62] H. Lorimer, '"Happy Hostelling in the Highlands": Nationhood, Citizenship and the Inter-War Youth Movement', *Journal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society* 113, 1 (1997), 42-50; Lorimer, 'Your Wee Bit of Hill and Glen'.
[63] RA *Gazette*, Autumn 1937, 6.
[64] T. A. Leonard, 'The Freedom of the Fells', *YHAR* (1937), 5, 3, 65.
[65] YHA AR (1938), 5.
[66] Letter dated 30 Nov.1938 (RAA 4287/02/008/2).

> appeared that the national and area leaders of the Y.H.A. had decided not to touch 'Access to Mountains and Moorlands' with a nine-foot prop.[67]

In both cases, the criticism was largely unjustified. Trevelyan's brother, Sir Charles, had, after all, introduced the first Bill to address Access to Mountains in England and Ireland in 1908 (previous Bills were restricted to Scotland and Wales) and attempted to introduce a second Bill in 1926, but in the early years, the leadership of the YHA had focused their energies on ensuring that the Association not only survived, but prospered. In contrast, the weak management, schismatic tendencies, and parlous financial position of the Ramblers' Association severely undermined its own effectiveness as a campaigning organization.[68]

From its inception in 1930, the YHA had been well-managed. Under Catchpool's capable leadership, it had adroitly used the national and regional press to raise funds and to recruit members, and in 1932 it launched its own in-house magazine, the *YHA Rucksack*. The YHA was innovative in the use of film to promote its objectives. In keeping with the vision of its leaders, the first YHA film, 'Youth Hails Adventure' (1933), emphasised social inclusion. Featuring a group of young workers at a London factory, dreaming of a country holiday, the boss's son, bored by a family holiday at a fashionable seaside resort, and a party of young female cyclists, the film culminates with all of the characters collaborating to open a new hostel.[69] The film was favourably reviewed in the outdoor press and heavily in demand at exhibitions and public meetings of educational and outdoor organizations.[70]

The leadership of the YHA therefore promoted a broad range of ideals that combined Trevelyan's neo-romanticism, Abercrombie's preservationism, and Leonard and Temple's Christian socialism. However, it departed from the practices of the pre-War, adult-led youth movements in its essentially optimistic, tolerant and emancipatory celebration of 'youth', using the term less in the sense of chronological age than as an expression of hope for a better future. The original vision of the YHA was 'to help all, but especially young people to a greater knowledge, use and love of the countryside, particularly by providing hostels or other simple accommodation for them on their travels'. The objective was amended in 1933 to 'young people of limited means', which encouraged some to believe that it was primarily intended to serve working-class members. In fact, the amendment was made on the advice of the YHA's solicitor, in order to ensure that the

[67] *SCRH* 1939-40, 175.
[68] RA ExCo minutes 6/7 May 1939 acknowledged these weaknesses.
[69] www.yorkshirefilmarchive.com/sites/yorkshirefilmarchive.com/files/node_pdfs/node_8555. (23 Apr.2015).
[70] E.g. *H&C*, Feb. 1934, 28.

Association preserved its charitable status and did not become liable for taxes.[71] The original intention of the leaders was to help all young people, regardless of class, gender, race or creed.[72]

Such were the aims and objectives of the leadership, but to what extent did they influence the behaviour of those who stayed in youth hostels? Writing in 1932, Henry Symonds observed that, in contrast to the members, the leaders of the YHA 'were of more sober years and also of more dignity…Youth has shown little desire to actually manage its own scheme, though it is keen enough to use the hostels.'[73] His views were echoed by John Walsh, editor of *Hiker and Camper*, who wrote in 1931 that he 'would like to see more energy and more real youth' within the senior management of the YHA.[74]

The honorary officers and Executive Committee members of the YHA were drawn from the national and regional 'great and good', and a yawning generation gap separated them from most ordinary members. In reality, however, the National Executive had very limited control over day-to-day operations, particularly in the early years. Instead, the YHA relied upon the activism of its mainly young, grassroots supporters. Indeed, its success in the pioneering years was largely founded upon the fact that it was highly decentralised, which encouraged a strong sense of local ownership among its members, many of whom were prepared to labour for long hours in voluntary work parties in order to open new hostels.

While the National Office (based in Trevelyan House, Welwyn Garden City) raised money, recruited new members, and communicated the ideals of the YHA leadership to the media, the opening and management of the hostels was largely delegated to the Regional Councils, many of which were staffed by members of the CHA and the HF who were imbued with the nonconformist ethos of voluntarism but perhaps took a more pragmatic view of the purpose of the Association. Harry Chapman, Hon. Secretary of the Lakeland Region, for example, stated that 'the aim of the YHA is to provide cheap holidays. Few club folk, if the question were put bluntly to them, would deny that…they care nothing at all for the "aims" and "ideals" which some claim that the hostel movement exists for. To us hostelling is a game and not a solemn movement.'[75] A letter in *Tramper and Cyclist* in 1934 made the same point: 'The hostel movement should have as its prime motive the

[71] YHA ExCo 26 Feb. 1933. SYHA ExCo 24 May 1933.
[72] An early draft of the constitution read: 'young people without restriction as to sex, nationality, religion or politics'. NCSS Conference 10 Apr.1930 (CHAA, ADM/12/10).
[73] H. H. Symonds, 'The Ways of Britain', *YHAR*,1,1, 8.
[74] *H&C*, Mar. 1931, 3.
[75] Maurice-Jones and Porter, *Spirit of YHA,* 92.

provision of more and better hostels…There is no need for abstract meanderings on its spiritual value…[by] hostel officials who never "youth hostel".'[76]

Even the Regional Councils, staffed by volunteers and meeting perhaps once a month, exercised very limited day-to-day management control and each hostel developed a distinctive character. In the early years, the YHA operated a franchise model and numerous 'hostels' were independently-owned guest houses. The owners agreed to provide food and accommodation at the agreed price in return for free advertising in the *YHA Handbook*, but they probably knew nothing of the high ideals espoused by the leadership of the Association. When the YHA acquired the freehold or leasehold of a hostel, it installed its own warden. Basic pay was low and since hostels were often located in remote rural areas and were closed between 10:00 and 17:00, the job appealed mainly to young outdoor enthusiasts. Following the opening of Idwal Cottage in Snowdonia in 1931, many of the younger generation of Liverpool- and Manchester-based climbers, who had previously stayed at the Climbers' Club hut at Helyg, decamped to the nearby youth hostel. Photographs taken in 1933 show Colin Kirkus and Alan Hargreaves standing outside Idwal with Connie Alexander, the warden.[77] Alexander was warden of the first British youth hostel at Pennant Hall in North Wales, before moving to Idwal, and features in Elizabeth Coxhead's novel *One Green Bottle* (1951), which contrasts the snobbish and condescending all-male 'Everesters' at Helyg with the young friendships, first love, and intoxicating freedom of life at the youth hostel.[78] As Alexander told a visiting reporter: 'We offer good shelter, comfort and food if it is required and leave the rest to hikers and their good sense.'[79] According to the reporter, the Common Room at Idwal was 'a haven of light, laughter and song', and the hostel was often so overcrowded that young hostellers had to sleep on the veranda, and occasionally awoke to find snow on their blankets. At Winchester Mill, a National Trust property converted into a hostel in 1931, hostellers jumped into the mill race holding onto a knotted rope if they wanted a shower. 'Besides being a fine cook and a good provider and manager "Joey" [the warden] would sit at the piano if things seemed a bit dull and start the crowd off in a rousing song.'[80]

[76] *T&C*, Dec.1934, 267.
[77] See page 82. Dean, *Hands of a Climber*, 110, 151.
[78] E. Coxhead, *One Green Bottle* (1951).
[79] *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 6 Apr.1931.
[80] Coburn, *Youth Hostel Story*, 36.

Illustration 19: Washing-up duty at Wooler Youth Hostel, a converted railway station, 1932 (YHA)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many wardens were in their mid- to late twenties, little older than most members. With limited money and public transport options, many hostellers repeatedly visited the same hostels, forming close friendships with the wardens and with other regular hostellers. Many of the more celebrated wardens were young women, such as Connie and Joey, who contrived to ignore many of the high-minded strictures imposed by the leadership, whilst maintaining discipline within their hostels. At Idwal, Hargreaves recalled an occasion when a bottle of whisky was smuggled into the hostel:

> It got shared around among the hostellers after dinner – everybody got some! Later we were all enjoying a game of sardines [a derivative of hide-and-seek], when an eminent figure arrived at the hostel, a senior officer from the Liverpool Y.H.A. He observed the whisky bottle, now empty, still on the dinner table and brusquely enquired of Connie what it was doing there. Quickly she replied that they used it as a candle holder![81]

Meanwhile, at Winchester, Herbert Gatliff observed that ‘Joey, best of wardens, rules with brisk understanding. Lights out is no empty command at Winchester. Gently but surely we

[81] Dean, *Hands of a Climber*, 111.

are marshalled to bed; one or two of the more restless spirits murmuring maybe of the tyranny of woman, but obedient withal.'[82]

Many hostels were extremely primitive. The first hostel to be lit by electricity opened in 1934, but many remained without power or running water until after the Second World War. Lighting was provided by oil lamps, while cooking was carried out on primus stoves. A sing-song in the common room was an integral part of any stay and a YHA song book was published in 1933: 'Song books have now been provided at a number of hostels, so that the jollity of the evening sing-songs will be increased by all singing the same words, even if we don't pitch our voices all in the same key!'[83] Borthwick described a Scottish youth hostel after a wet day on the hills: 'The atmosphere was thick, a compost of cooking, bodies, and steaming clothes; but no one cared. Every one sang, so that dripping travellers arrived at the door and were amazed. Sixty people far gone in song can make a lot of noise.'[84]

A *Daily Mail* journalist who spent a night in a youth hostel in 1931 reported on 'Gay Company amid Mists of Dawn: Friendship and a Tin of Beans'.[85] A *Daily Express* journalist visiting Derwent Hall in April 1933 was equally impressed:

> Never once did I hear a single word of authority, an order, or a request. My steak and kidney pudding, trifle, tea and bread and butter cost me 1s 2d. I washed up afterwards. After supper, tweeds began to mingle with the shorts, ties appeared and afternoon frocks…The ping-pong table is never silent, nor is the piano. There is singing, laughing and dancing.[86]

It was, as Borthwick observed,

> a young world, governed by the young. I was twenty at the time, and most of the people I met were my own age; people who, like myself, had only recently discovered that they could leave city, class, and the orthodoxy of elders behind them at week-ends and create their own lives for a day and a half a week beyond the influence of these things.[87]

[82] H. Gatliff, 'The YHA – Some Memories and Hopes', *The Southern Pathfinder*, Spring 1934 in L. Clark, *Herbert Gatliff: An English Eccentric* (Bristol, 1995),13.
[83] 'News from the Field', *YHAR* (1935), 3, 3 , 61.
[84] Borthwick, *Always a Little Further*, 136.
[85] 6 Apr.1931.
[86] 21 Apr.1933.
[87] Borthwick, *Always a Little Further,* 57.

Trevelyan was perhaps conscious of the risk that this young world, which he had helped to create, might spiral out of control, when he praised YHA members 'who take their holidays strenuously and joyously, without slacking or rioting'.[88] Some wardens did indeed lose control. The games played at Buckhurst Hill youth hostel, near Epping, over Christmas 1932 included parlour hockey; a boat race 'out of the Common Room, round the hall table, through the arch of the roll top desk...through two dark passages and then past the post'; and a point to point steeplechase 'in which females mounted their unwilling steeds, culminating in a descent down the fire chute'. One couple 'got lost for an hour and a half' while playing a game of sardines and there was dancing in the hall 'to the metallic melodies emanating from Jim's second best gramophone'. The party eventually broke up at three o'clock in the morning. The warden of the hostel, Jim Dixon, was subsequently sacked for other misdemeanours.[89]

At Shottery Lodge youth hostel, near Stratford-upon-Avon, the warden had a patch over one eye and was universally known as 'The Pirate'. The hostel 'needed a tough warden to handle the many different youth hostellers…people of all types and nationalities'.[90] Early Annual Reports regularly stated that 'there has been no complaint of any substance concerning the conduct of members of our Association throughout the year'. However, by 1936 petty thefts were reported in several hostels and by 1938 the Hostel Management Committee was taking legal advice on preparing a blacklist of members 'guilty of undesirable behaviour'.[91] As the YHA rapidly expanded into a mass-membership organization, some of the idealistic, collaborative spirit began to wane. In an article entitled 'Youth Hostels: What is Wrong?' Stephenson reported that some members were complaining that hostels had become 'like cheap hotels and weekend clubs'.[92] In an article written in 1939, entitled 'The Regional Secretary Replies', a (voluntary) secretary bemoaned the fact that 'members say: "The warden is rude, the meals are rotten, beds are damp, hostel is dirty"…The warden says: "Members are impudent, lazy, greedy, inconsiderate…They won't do their hostel duties."'[93]

In the records left by members of their experience of staying in youth hostels there are countless tales of youthful adventures and friendships, but few references to the moral, spiritual and intellectual ideals espoused by the leadership. Like the broader hiking movement, the true 'Spirit of YHA' appears to have been companionable, boisterous,

[88] Letter to *The Times*, 21 Jan. 1933.
[89] 'That's Fun – That Was', A Record of Christmas 1932 at Epping YH (Y691001).
[90] Truby, *Miles and Milestones*, 2, 4.
[91] YHA ExCo 26 Sep. 1936; 27 Nov.1938; SYHA ExCo 29 May 1937.
[92] *John Bull*, 2 Feb. 1935.
[93] 'The Regional Secretary Replies', *YHAR* (1939), 7, 3, 10.

energetic, perhaps idealistic, but essentially escapist. The few accounts that do exist of overtly political or campaigning activities tend to be in respect of causes that would not have enjoyed the whole-hearted support of the leadership. The BWSF sometimes stayed at youth hostels where the wardens were said to be 'sympathisers'.[94] A correspondent in *Tramper and Cyclist* in 1934 complained that there were youth hostels where 'red shirted members sing the Red Flag…[and] now the other shirted parties are thinking of taking a hand'.[95] When a party of *Hitlerjugend* arrived at a hostel wearing uniform in 1937 they were politely asked to leave and the Home Office was informed.[96] A group of Clarion cyclists staying in a youth hostel in the same year enjoyed a 'real class-conscious time' in the company of a 'bolshie caterer, two vegetarian communists, a crowd of Woodcraft Folk, and a hostel warden who was an "intellectual"'.[97] Meanwhile, when volunteers organized and led walking holidays for the unemployed in the mid-1930s, a few of them adopted a rather high moral tone, noting that 'a great point in favour of these hikes is that it permits no shirking. Every man knows that he has his tramp to do before he reaches his meal and his bed at the hostel and he soon realizes that this is not accomplished without effort.'[98]

While the YHA was clearly not immune to the class divisions and snobbery that afflicted society in general, the instincts of most members appear to have been relatively tolerant, inclusive and egalitarian. As Catchpool observed: 'There were no privileges, boys from richer and poorer homes cleaned and cooked and slept side by side.'[99] Duncan Simpson argues that 'youth hostels encouraged an exploration of social landscapes…By bringing people together in their simplicity, youth hostels were forerunners and outliers of the post war period.'[100] In 1937, the YHA leadership announced their intention to form a Mountaineering Section, using Idwal as a base, to provide members with a basic training in rock-climbing techniques. However, because climbing in Snowdonia was so strongly associated with the upper-middle-class tradition at Pen-y-Pass and Helyg, the proposal met with strong opposition in the *YHA Rucksack*, with members expressing concern that it would lead to 'class distinction, snobbishness and false values'.[101] As a result, the initiative was shelved until after the Second World War.

The public pronouncements of the YHA leadership demonstrate that they hoped that the Association would foster the physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral well-being of young

[94] Gardiner, *The Thirties*, 183.
[95] *T&C*, Apr.1934, 52.
[96] YHA ExCo 20 Nov.1937.
[97] *Clarion Cyclist*, Feb. 1937, quoted in Griffiths, *Labour and the Countryside*, 92.
[98] 'Unemployed Hike No. 2', *YHAR* (1935), 3, 3, 56.
[99] Catchpool, *Candles in the Darkness*, 146.
[100] Simpson, *Open to All*, 'Simplicity', para 35.
[101] *YHAR* (1937), 5, 1, 18.

people and encourage the preservation of natural beauty. As its membership grew, the *YHA Rucksack* achieved the largest circulation of any 'outdoor' publication and introduced readers to a range of countryside issues. It helped some preservation societies, notably the National Trust, to take the first tentative steps towards broadening their membership base and it actively promoted the Country Code, which was certainly conceived as a benevolent form of 'social control', providing guidance to urban youths visiting the country for the first time. However, the broader notion of the YHA as an instrument of social control, proposed to varying degrees by Taylor, Howkins, Lowerson and Wright is problematic, representing members of the YHA as suggestible 'empty vessels', into which the leadership poured their own hopes and fears. Contemporary accounts suggest that the elderly trampers, preservationists and ramblers who acted as honorary officers or sat on the National Executive Committee of the YHA were remote figures. As with most widely dispersed organizations, the culture of the YHA was overwhelmingly determined by the values and behaviour of its local leadership, most of whom were young. Like the broader hiking movement, the YHA during the 1930s was first and foremost a manifestation of an emerging youth culture; it was 'a young world, governed by the young'.

Chapter 7

The Legacy of the Mass Outdoor Movement

In 'A Planned Countryside' (1989), Alan Rogers asserts that

> until the Second World War…concern and interest regarding the countryside was very much the preserve of the middle and upper classes. It was really only from among these numerically small groups that people could be found who owned or used rural land or who were concerned about its appearance.

In contrast, since the Second World War, Rogers argues that 'the countryside has become the property of a large majority of the population…the urban public feel a proprietorial interest in the countryside'.[1] While Rogers is correct that the main legislative changes that gave expression to changing public attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside occurred after the Second World War, the changes themselves started during the interwar years. Furthermore, the foundations for the new legislation were laid during the Second World War, and many of the activists who shaped that legislation were members of the pre-First World War generation.

During the Second World War, after the immediate crisis of 1940 had passed, the government embarked upon an ambitious programme of planning for the reconstruction of Britain in the post-war era. Wartime planning addressed health, welfare, housing and urban development; it also addressed the countryside. In *The Rights of Man* (1940), H. G. Wells endeavoured to set out the ideals for which the war was being fought. Included among his original proposals, which ultimately formed the basis for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, was 'the right to roam over any kind of country, moorland, mountain, farm, great garden or what not, where [the citizen's] presence will not be destructive of its special use nor dangerous to himself nor seriously inconvenient to his fellow citizens'.[2] As suggested by his semi-autobiographical novel *The History of Mr Polly* (1910), Wells had been a keen walker since before the First World War. By the outbreak of the Second World War his assertion that access to open country should be a fundamental human right probably reflected the majority view of the British Left.[3]

[1] In Mingay, ed., *The Rural Idyll*, 100.
[2] H. G. Wells, *The Rights of Man* (1940), 'Declaration of Rights' (6).
[3] H.G. Wells, *History of Mr. Polly*, 1968 Heron edn, 25-27 (first pubd.1910).

In 1941, Lord Reith, Minister of Works and Buildings, appointed Lord Justice Scott to chair a committee on land utilization in rural areas. The terms of reference included both economic considerations and the preservation of rural amenities.[4] The submission to the committee by the Ramblers' Association called for access to open country and proposed a number of long distance footpaths including the Pennine Way, the Offa's Dyke Path, the Pilgrims' Way and the South Downs Way. When the Scott Report was published in 1943, it recommended that 'within the first year of peace…the demarcation of National Parks…be completed'. It also acknowledged the public interest in access to the countryside, but made no specific recommendations.

In response to the Scott Committee, and two other committees investigating urban planning, the government established a new Ministry of Town and Country Planning in 1943. Shortly afterwards, Tom Stephenson resigned from his job as outdoor correspondent at the *Daily Herald* to become the Ministry's press officer.[5] In April 1945, John Dower published a report to the Minister of Town and Country Planning on *National Parks in England and Wales*, expanding upon the report he had drafted for the CPRE in 1938. The Dower Report recommended areas for designation as National Parks and backed the right to roam at will over all uncultivated land, arguing that the 1939 Access to Mountains Act should be replaced by a new measure reinstating a presumption in favour of access, as proposed in James Bryce's original 1884 Bill. The Report specifically referred to the grouse moors of the northern Peak, arguing that 'walkers should, and sooner or later will, be given the freedom of access'.[6] However, it maintained the interwar preservationist conception of National Parks as a socially-exclusive project:

> For all those who want to spend their holidays gregariously and to enjoy the facilities – so well provided by the resorts – of cinemas, music-halls, dance-cafés, bathing pools, pleasure parks, promenades, shopping centres and the like, the National Parks are not the place. They had far better keep away, and (some of them, perhaps, after an unsuccessful experiment or two) pretty certainly will keep away – provided that any proposals to establish, within National Parks, the kinds of facilities they desire are firmly resisted.[7]

In his capacity as press officer at the Ministry, Stephenson immediately set about publicising the Dower Report, notwithstanding the fact that the government had not

[4] Scott, *Land Utilization in Rural Areas*.
[5] Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 23, ch.11.
[6] J. Dower, *National Parks in England and Wales* (1945), 33, 36.
[7] Ibid., 23.

committed to any of its proposals. Shortly before the 1945 election, the government set up a National Parks Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Arthur Hobhouse to consider the report's recommendations, and during the election campaign the YHA and the Ramblers' Association jointly circulated pamphlets to every candidate, urging them to support the setting up of a Commission with powers to designate and establish National Parks.[8]

In 1944, Geoffrey Winthrop Young, who served as president of the Alpine Club from 1942 to 1944, and Leo Amery, who served from 1944 to 1947, successfully carried a motion calling for the establishment of a British Mountaineering Council (BMC). Amery (born 1873) had taken part in Young and Trevelyan's Lake District 'manhunts' before the First World War and was Secretary of State for India in Churchill's administration, but lost his seat in the 1945 election. The establishment of the BMC was belated recognition that the Alpine Club could no longer claim to represent the sport in Britain, but the choice of the word 'mountaineering', rather than 'climbing', betrayed the ethos of its founders. Initially the BMC had 25 constituent clubs, and the committee consisted of representatives from the Alpine Club and the senior mountaineering clubs. In 1946 John Barford (born 1914), the Hon. Secretary of the BMC, wrote *Climbing in Britain*, the first popular handbook of the sport, covering hill walking, rock climbing and mountaineering. It sold over 120,000 copies.[9]

According to McKibbin, the Labour victory in July 1945 reflected both the collapse in confidence in the competency of the Conservative administration in 1938 and a growing radicalism, particularly among the young, that had been apparent throughout the 1930s and the Second World War.[10] Labour's victory enabled the formation of a powerful new countryside alliance of Labour activists and radical intellectuals, many of whom had close personal ties to the outdoor movement. Professor Robert Chorley (born 1895) replaced Patrick Abercrombie as Hon. Secretary of the CPRE, while Abercrombie succeeded Sir Guy Dawber in the largely ceremonial role of chairman. Chorley was a lawyer by training, served as a civil servant during the Second World War, and was made a Labour peer in 1945. He was a former president of the FRCC and met his future wife, Katherine (née Hopkinson) at one of Young's Pen-y-Pass gatherings. Chorley's legal knowledge and influence with the Attlee administration were vital assets as the CPRE continued to press for National Parks. When Chorley

[8] *Parliament and the Countryside: An Appeal to Electors and Candidates from the Ramblers' Association and the Youth Hostels Associations* (1945).
[9] J. E. Q. Barford, *Climbing in Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1946).
[10] See McKibbin, *Parties and People*, ch.4.

helped to pilot the National Parks and Access to Countryside Bill through the House of Lords in 1949, the Leader of the House was Lord Addison, who had chaired the original National Parks Committee set up by Ramsay MacDonald in 1929.

The new Labour government appointed Lewis Silkin (born 1889) as Minister of Town and Country Planning. A former colleague of Stephenson in the ILP, Silkin had given a speech at the rally held at Leith Hill in 1939 to protest against the Creech Jones Access to Mountains Act. Immediately after his appointment, Silkin created a new committee to investigate Footpaths and Access to the Countryside, to sit alongside the existing National Parks Committee. The Committee was chaired by Hobhouse, with Stephenson acting as secretary. When the Footpaths and Access Committee published its findings, it recommended access to all uncultivated land, including mountain, moor, heath, down, cliff, beach and foreshore, subject to minimal safeguards to prevent abuse.[11]

In his budget speech in April 1946, Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, signalled the commitment of the new Labour administration by setting aside a sum of £50 million as 'a nest egg…which could be used to finance some of the operations necessary in order to give to the public permanent access to the National Parks'.[12] Like Amery, Dalton had taken part in Young and Trevelyan's 'manhunts', and had been a keen tramper during the interwar years. In 1948 he was appointed president of the Ramblers' Association and in 1951 he approved the Pennine Way in his capacity as Minister of Town and Country Planning.

John Dower died in 1947 and was replaced as secretary of the CPRE Standing Committee on National Parks by Henry Symonds, who had been chairman of the original Merseyside-based British YHA and helped to found the Friends of the Lake District.[13] Stephenson was invited to join the CPRE Executive Committee in 1947, replacing Arthur Leonard, who died the following year. In 1948, Stephenson resigned from the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and became full-time secretary of the Ramblers' Association, based in London, so that he could participate fully in the campaign for access without the constraints imposed by the Civil Service Code. These appointments effectively cemented the post-war rapprochement between the outdoor, access and preservation movements.

[11] A. Hobhouse, *Footpaths and Access to the Countryside* (1947).
[12] Hansard, 17 Apr.1946.
[13] See draft MS (by Stephenson?) 'The History of the National Parks Movement', RA 02/500.

The Hobhouse Report, published in July 1947, proposed the establishment of twelve National Parks in three waves: Firstly, the Lake District, North Wales, Peak District and Dartmoor; secondly the Yorkshire Dales, Pembrokeshire Coast, Exmoor and the South Downs; and finally, the Roman Wall, North Yorkshire Moors, Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains, and the Norfolk Broads.[14] It also recommended the creation of six long-distance footpaths: the Pennine Way, the Chilterns to Devon Coast Path, the Pilgrims' Way, the South Downs Way, the Offa's Dyke Path and the Thames Footpath.

All of the initiatives described above clearly bear the stamp of the interwar constituencies discussed in this thesis, and the most prominent lobbyists and campaigners in the immediate post-war years continued to be members of the pre-First World War generation, using the organizational structures created between the wars by the upper-middle-class tramping and preservation movements, and the upper-working- and lower-middle-class rambling movement. While numerically far more significant, the interwar hiking movement did not generate an organizational structure capable of producing a national leader or of mounting an effective campaign, but by sheer weight of numbers hikers contributed to a major shift in public opinion. Speaking in support of the 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Bill, Dalton observed that when James Bryce and Charles Trevelyan had introduced Access to Mountains Bills they had been regarded as 'hopeless cranks', but noted that 'a great ripening of opinion…has taken place in recent years'.[15] The whole of parliament sensed the change in public mood, and the Bill was treated as a non-party matter, and given an unopposed second reading.[16]

Even before the war, as media interest in the hiking craze subsided, the distinctive youthful identity of the movement started to dissipate, and hiking gradually evolved into a mainstream leisure activity. As participants aged, the three distinctive interwar strands of the outdoor movement gradually converged, and this process accelerated during and particularly after the war, as a growing proportion of the population started to value the recreational use of the countryside as an escape from war-torn townscapes and economic austerity. Unlike the First World War, during which outdoor leisure activities had virtually ceased, there was greater continuity during the Second World War. Many rambling clubs continued to organise local walks, and the movement progressively shed its Victorian idealism as the pre-War generation of leaders died or retired. The YHA and SYHA continued to function throughout the war. Membership of

[14] A. Hobhouse, *Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)* (1947).
[15] Hansard, 1 Apr.1949.
[16] Hansard (HL), 18 Oct. 1949.

both Associations dipped in 1940, but recovered rapidly to reach 230,000 and 36,000, respectively, by 1948.[17] Some parts of the upper-middle-class tramping and preservation movement, notably the National Trust, also started the gradual transition into mass-membership organizations, while others, such as the Alpine Club, declined into genteel obscurity.

The 1945 election produced a crop of young MPs who had participated in the hiking craze and were natural supporters of the government's legislative programme for a planned countryside. Over the Whit Bank Holiday in 1948, Stephenson and a party of six Labour MPs walked along the proposed route of the Pennine Way from Middleton-in-Teesdale to Hadrian's Wall. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Dalton (born 1887) inevitably attracted most of the headlines and was dubbed the 'Red Rambler' by the press, but the five other MPs were all members of the post-War generation. Arthur Blenkinsop (born 1911) was president of the Northern Federation of Rambling Clubs; Barbara Castle (1910) and George Chetwynd (1916) had both been hikers between the wars and were active in the Ramblers' Association after 1945; Geoffrey de Freitas (1913) was described as 'a pioneer youth hosteller'; while Fred Willey (1910) was said to be 'resuming a pre-war activity'.[18]

While there was broad-based public support for preserving rural amenities and protecting rights of way, the campaign for access to open country continued to be essentially a local issue.[19] In his speech moving the second reading, Silkin described the National Parks and Access to Countryside Bill as 'a people's charter…for the hikers and the ramblers, for everyone who loves to get out into the open air and enjoy the countryside'.[20] He referred specifically to the access problems on the grouse moors of the northern Peak District, but his Bill nevertheless rejected a presumption of access to open country, in favour of a legal process by which Local Authorities could apply for access to designated areas. During the committee stage, a few Labour MPs argued that the Bill should be amended to incorporate a presumption in favour of access (as recommended by both the Dower and Hobhouse Reports), but Silkin insisted that access was not a problem in any of the National Parks apart from the Peak District, where he established a special authority – the Peak Park Planning Board – to negotiate local access agreements with the owners of the grouse moors.[21] Late amendments to the Bill were discussed at a special meeting of the Ramblers'

[17] Coburn, *Youth Hostel Story;* SYHA AR (1948), 2.
[18] *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 9 Apr.1948; *News Chronicle*, 24 May 1948.
[19] A. MacEwan and M. MacEwan, *Greenprints for the Countryside?* (1988), ch. 2.
[20] Hansard, 31 Mar. 1949.
[21] Hansard (SC), 24 May 1949.

Association Executive Committee held at the Bull's Head in Castleton in June 1949. Underlining the new relationship between the outdoor movement and the government, the minutes of the meeting record that Lewis Silkin MP dropped in for a pint at 11am, and an informal discussion ensued.[22]

The 1949 Act largely satisfied the objectives of the National Parks campaign led by the CPRE. During the 1950s, ten of the twelve Parks recommended by the Hobhouse Committee were designated under the Act, and in 1951 the National Parks Commission launched the 'Country Code', a slightly revised version of the Code of Courtesy for the Countryside first proposed in 1933. The Act also satisfied the longstanding demand of the Commons Society for the preparation of a definitive map of all public footpaths and bridleways. The retirement of Sir Lawrence Chubb as secretary of the Society in 1948, after 52 years of service, facilitated closer co-operation between the Commons Society and the Ramblers' Association, and it was members of the latter who did much of the groundwork preparing the definitive map, thereby preserving many existing rights of way.

The Act put in place legislation enabling the creation of long-distance footpaths. The Pennine Way, proposed by Stephenson in 1935, was the first to open in 1965. The path crosses both Kinder Scout and Bleaklow – a celebration of the victorious campaign for access to the privately-owned grouse moors of Derbyshire. Today, the numerous National Trails that criss-cross Britain are commonly regarded as the legacy of the Ramblers' Association, but ironically when Phil Barnes was first asked by the Association to evaluate Stephenson's proposal for a Pennine Way in 1936, he recommended that the Ramblers' Association should not support it.[23] Stephenson was a journalist working in London at the time, while Barnes, like the other leaders of the Manchester and Sheffield Ramblers' Federations, was preoccupied with local access issues and did not see the value of National Trails.

The distribution and character of the landscapes selected for the highest standard of legal protection by the Labour government in the immediate post-war years raise some interesting questions about landscape aesthetics in the mid-twentieth century and reflect the continuing influence of the three distinctive interwar strands of the outdoor movement in the early post-war era. The Hobhouse Report defined the essential requirements of a National Park as being

[22] RA ExCo Minutes 49/79, June 1949.
[23] RA ExCo Minutes 1/2 Feb. 1936, 01/001.

> that it should have great natural beauty, a high value for open-air recreation and substantial continuous extent. Further, the distribution of selected areas should as far as practicable be such that at least one of them is quickly accessible from each of the main centres of population in England and Wales. Lastly there is merit in variety and with the wide diversity of landscape which is available in England and Wales, it would be wrong to confine the selection of National Parks to the more rugged areas of mountain and moorland, and to exclude other districts which, though of less outstanding grandeur and wildness, have their own distinctive beauty and a high recreational value.

When the Act came into effect in December 1949, a new National Parks Commission (later the Countryside Commission) was given responsibility for designating and regulating the Parks. Members of the Commission included Stephenson, Francis Ritchie, president of the Birmingham & Midlands Ramblers' Federation and Pauline Dower (née Trevelyan), John's widow. In its selection of Parks, the Commission ignored the guidance laid down in the Hobhouse Report by rejecting both the South Downs and the Norfolk Broads. As a consequence, all ten Parks that it selected are located in the North and West and all, apart from the Pembrokeshire Coast, consist of rugged mountains and moorland. Furthermore, until 1989, the nearest National Park to London was the Brecon Beacons in Wales.

Hobhouse praised the variety of landscapes in England and Wales:

> The contrast of mountain and wild moorland with the green and pleasant farmlands of the valleys, the cliffs and small sandy coves of the coastline, the beauty of oak and beech woods, the small undulations of the chalk downs, the ordered homeliness of villages and farms, the fine architecture of Norman castle, Gothic abbey or Tudor manor-house.[24]

But despite this rich variety, the dominant landform in six out of the ten original National Parks is monotonous moorland, while the 'ideal English landscape' invoked by Alun Howkins in 'The Discovery of Rural England' – a mainly southern landscape of rolling fields, woodlands, hedgerows, nucleated villages, manor houses, and churches – was completely ignored.[25] As Shoard points out, moors are not rare in Britain, nor are they threatened by development to the same extent as many other landforms. Moreover, they have exceptionally low biodiversity and while they may feel 'wild', many

[24] Hobhouse, *Report of the National Parks Committee*, 9.
[25] Howkins, 'Discovery of Rural England'.

are in fact man-made, and would revert to scrub or rough woodland if grazing ceased.[26] Nevertheless, moorland was massively over-represented in the first wave of National Parks.

At a practical level, the selection was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that the new planning restrictions imposed by the National Park legislation were less likely to be controversial in areas with low land values and few inhabitants. Hobhouse's requirement for a 'substantial continuous extent' of land also tended to rule out areas containing clusters of housing or industry, in favour of more extensive areas of elevated or poor-quality land. The Malvern Hills and Cannock Chase, for example, were rejected by Dower on the grounds that they were too small, while the Cornish Coast (recommended for consideration by Dower) was rejected by Hobhouse because the areas of undeveloped coastline were thought to be insufficiently continuous. Similar considerations precluded the Cotswolds, which were deemed to fall short of the required standard for extent and wildness. But a requirement for 'wildness' necessarily excluded most of the country at a time when, as A.J.P. Taylor observed, 'all England became suburban except the slums at one extreme and the Pennine moors at the other'.[27]

No poll was conducted to determine the landscapes most valued by the population, but guidebooks provide a rough measure of the aesthetic preferences of a certain section of the public during the interwar and immediate post-war years. Of the fifteen English volumes in Batsford's *Face of Britain* series, published between 1936 and 1952, just three relate to the North of England, while the whole of Wales is covered by a single volume.[28] Likewise, just 18 of the 129 pages of Vaughan Cornish's book *The Scenery of England* (1932) are devoted to the North; while William Thomas devoted just 51 of the 193 pages of *The English Landscape* (1938) to the North.[29] In part, this pronounced southern bias probably reflected the geographical distribution of the mainly middle-aged and middle-class, car-owning purchasers of guide books. But it also suggests a continuing aesthetic preference for the 'ideal English landscape'.

The distribution of youth hostels provides a rough measure of the landscape preferences of an entirely different social group, consisting mainly of young, upper-working and lower-middle-class hikers and cyclists. As discussed in Chapter 5, most

[26] M. Shoard, 'The Lure of the Moors', in J. R. Gold and J. Burgess, eds., *Valued Environments* (1982).
[27] A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1965), 167.
[28] There were also four volumes covering Scotland.
[29] Cornish, *The Scenery of England*; W. B. Thomas, *The English Landscape* (1938).

hikers frequented hostels that were relatively close to their homes, because of limitations imposed by transport, cost, and time off work. As a result, there were relatively high concentrations of hostels in the South Downs, the Chilterns, the Cotswolds, the Welsh Marches, the Peak District and along coastlines close to major centres of population. There were also dense clusters of hostels in the mountainous regions of the Lake District and Snowdonia, and along the coastlines of Devon and Cornwall, which are relatively remote from major towns. Apart from the Peak District, the same was not true, however, of areas where moorland is the dominant landform: Northumberland, the North Yorkshire Moors and Dartmoor all had relatively low densities of hostels, suggesting that the Commission's choice of National Parks did not reflect the landscape preferences of most hikers either.

In 'A Love of the Country' (1814) William Hazlitt argued that, unlike the constantly changing world of men, nature has a sense of permanence. People change and grow old, but we regard trees, flowers and animals as classes of objects, not individuals. Trees may die, but the forest remains the same; a primrose seen in old age is the same as one seen in youth. **'**Thus Nature is a kind of universal home, and every object it presents to us an old acquaintance with unaltered looks.'[30] Hazlitt's argument still provides one of the most compelling explanations for a general attachment to the country, but more importantly it explains the strong regional attachments that many individuals feel towards particular landscapes associated with their childhood and youth.

In *Finding Valued Landscapes*, Lowenthal argues that natural aesthetics are strongly influenced by memory and nostalgia.[31] 'Features and patterns in the landscape make sense to us because we share a history with them…We see things simultaneously as they are and as we viewed them before; previous experience suffuses all present perception.'[32] Both the rambling and the hiking movements in the interwar years were profoundly local. With limited disposable income, and the constraints imposed by public transport and short weekends, most walkers did not stray far from home. Even upper-middle-class trampers and mountaineers tended to return year after year to the same place, whether Pen-y-Pass in Snowdonia or the inn at Wasdale Head in the Lakes. As a consequence, many walkers developed a strong emotional attachment to particular landscapes, and while practical considerations certainly played a major part

[30] W. Hazlitt, 'On the Love of the Country', *Examiner*, 27 Nov.1814.
[31] D. Lowenthal, 'Finding Valued Landscapes', *Progress in Human Geography* 2, 3 (1978), 373-418.
[32] D. Lowenthal, 'Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory', *Geographical Review* 63, 1 (1975), 5.

in the selection of National Parks, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the aesthetic preferences of a handful of activists also played a role.

Upper-middle-class trampers and preservationists succeeded in protecting the sublime landscapes of the Lake District and Snowdonia, where many had enjoyed holidays in their formative years. They were generally less enthusiastic about bureaucratic interference in the pastoral landscapes of the South, preferring instead to 'preserve and conserve the best of Rural Life, administered by people who know the local traditions, and who love their own countryside'.[33] Furthermore, big landowners in the South, operating through the powerful agricultural lobby, vigorously opposed any planning restrictions that might prejudice their ability to maximise the value of their land.

Lovers of moorland may have been relatively few in number, but through their dogged campaign for access to the peat moors of Derbyshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and longstanding connections with the Labour party, they secured positions of significant influence within the new bureaucratic countryside elite that came to power following Labour's victory in 1945. They also faced relatively little opposition from landowners or local authorities, and had some powerful allies in the upper-middle-class neo-romantic, outdoor movement. George Trevelyan, who had spent his youth tramping over the moors on the family estate in Northumberland, noted that

> Nature, no doubt, acts as a comforter and giver of strength even in southern woodlands and on smooth hillsides. But to many of us the moorland and the mountain seem to have more rugged strength and faithfulness with which in solitude we can converse and draw thence strength and comfort.[34]

John Dower, whose recommendations formed the basis for the selections made by the National Parks Commission, was born in Ilkley, Yorkshire, and lived in Northumberland and the Yorkshire Dales. Stephenson, a vocal member of the Commission, was born in Lancashire and spent his youth rambling over the northern moors and fells.

In contrast, the South Downs, the Chilterns, the Cotswolds and the Shropshire Hills were visited by thousands of hikers from the South East and the Midlands each weekend but, unlike the northern rambling movement, hikers had no tradition of campaigning and no organizational structure capable of lobbying the National Parks

[33] Countryside Conference Oct.1929. MERL C/1/102/1.
[34] Trevelyan, G. M., 'The Call and Claims of Natural Beauty', Rickman Godlee Lecture, 26 Oct.1931.

Commission. For them, walking was a healthy, sociable leisure activity, not a cause, and so their landscape preferences were largely ignored. Stephenson, Ritchie, and others on the National Parks Commission ruled against the Downs, on the grounds that they were not wild enough to be a National Park. Instead, Stephenson lobbied for the Cheviot Hills and claimed the credit for altering the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park to incorporate the Howgill Fells, a remote area of rough moorland and steep valleys between the Dales and the Lake District.[35] Yet the Downs were manifestly in far greater need of protection from development than either the Cheviot Hills or the Howgill Fells.[36]

In a post-script to a life spent campaigning for access to the mountains and moorlands of the North, Stephenson left a handwritten comment on the margins of a draft article, now in the Ramblers' Association archives:

> Sometimes think success came too soon. Persuaded Parliament a far greater volume of public opinion behind us than existed. Obvious today that we are still a small minority and great majority unconcerned about desecration of natural beauty.[37]

In one sense, Stephenson was, and still is, correct. Few people take a 'proprietorial' interest in the country, or care enough about it to campaign for access or for preservation. During the interwar years, the campaign for National Parks was led by a small, but well-funded and well-organized, group of upper-middle-class trampers and preservationists, while the campaign for access to open country was championed by an equally small number of lower-middle-class ramblers. During and immediately after the Second World War, these two strands united and the Labour victory in 1945 brought the pre-War generation of leaders of both movements into positions of power just as public opinion swung in favour of greater government intervention in rural planning. As Dalton observed, during the pre-War and interwar years, preservationists and access campaigners were regarded as 'hopeless cranks' by the political establishment. After the Second World War, they were taken seriously because politicians recognised that voters broadly supported the countryside lobby. Individually, few of the post-War generation of hikers, who made up the vast majority of participants in the mass outdoor movement, were political activists, but collectively they provided the groundswell of support that enabled a tenacious handful of activists from the pre-

[35] Stephenson, *Forbidden Land*, 198.
[36] See Shoard, *Theft of the Countryside*, 141-43.
[37] Draft of 'The National Park Campaign', RA 02/500.

War generation of trampers, preservationists and ramblers to achieve many of their objectives under the Labour administration elected in 1945. As a consequence, while the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act represents the legacy of the interwar mass outdoor movement, the character and distribution of the first wave of Parks reflect, to some extent, the continuing influence of the pre-War generation of activists.

When Stephenson stated that 'we are still a small minority', he was simply acknowledging that countryside campaigners and activists have always been a tiny minority. For the overwhelming majority, a walk in the country is a mundane activity. It is a social act; not a cause.

* * *

Despite the insistence of many historians, the First World War represented a major disjunction in the outdoor movement. Both the upper-middle-class 'gentlemen's clubs' and the upper-working- and lower-middle-class rambling clubs were slow to recover, and the unnatural generation gap created by the War deterred many younger walkers and climbers from joining established clubs. Although membership of the senior clubs, rambling clubs and holiday associations recovered in the mid-1920s, the demographics of these institutions show that they were too small, too exclusive, and too old to account for the dramatic expansion in the recreational use of the countryside by youths and young adults between 1927 and 1932.

Previous studies of the mass outdoor movement have understated the importance of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in popularising outdoor pursuits during the interwar years. Contemporary commentary and circumstantial evidence, including the use of the word 'hiking' and the adoption of an unofficial 'uniform', strongly suggest that former Scouts and Guides were responsible for starting the 'hiking craze'. Once started, the informal and dispersed activity coalesced into a recognisable youth movement as a result of 'generation-consciousness' created by the War, mass literacy, mass media and mass transportation. For the first time in British history, the most important determinant of attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside was not class, gender, religion or geography; it was age. The 'hiking craze' was perhaps the first nationwide social movement instigated and led by youth.

That such a large movement should have arisen with no leadership, political agenda or unifying ideology, challenges conventional wisdom about social movements before the Second World War, which is perhaps why historians have sought to root the mass

outdoor movement in pre-War neo-romanticism, or to interpret it as an ideologically motivated campaign. However, such interpretations privilege the activities and opinions of a few exceptional individuals, while ignoring the vast majority of young walkers in the interwar years, who were neither neo-romantics nor political activists. While many hikers were deeply moved by the beauty of the landscapes they discovered, there is little evidence of anti-modernism or nostalgia for an imagined rural past, and even less evidence to suggest a rejection of consumerism. Young hikers had almost no social contact with the upper-middle-class intellectual, neo-romantic tradition, and the latter made little effort to assimilate them into their clubs or associations. Indeed, many trampers and preservationists actively sought to exclude those whose attitudes to, and usage of, the countryside differed from their own. Likewise, while many hikers were undoubtedly idealistic, few were political activists. Many walkers, particularly in the North, were broadly sympathetic to the campaign for access to open country, and there were a number of locally significant access protests, but the overwhelming majority of participants in the mass outdoor movement took no part in any collaborative or campaigning activities.

The high public profile of access protests in the Peak District reflected an unusual combination of easy access from a number of major industrial cities and an exceptionally low density of public footpaths. The prominence given to these protests in the contemporary press, coupled with a highly effective propaganda campaign some 50 years later, has given rise to the popular misconception that the mass outdoor movement was centred upon the industrial towns and cities flanking the southern Pennines. However, numerous social surveys and membership data from the Ramblers' Association and the YHA clearly show that the rambling and hiking movements were both nationwide phenomena, unconnected in most parts of the country to the campaign for access to mountains and moorland. The activities of ramblers and hikers in other parts of the country had a lower profile because they did not, in general, gather in large crowds. Instead, they spread out over a dense network of public footpaths, or trespassed discretely over open country, where their presence was widely tolerated by landowners and largely ignored by the press. Since most did not take part in any political or campaigning activities, and few kept any record of their activities, their existence has also been overlooked by historians of the outdoor movement. As Arthur Sidgwick observed in 1912, walking 'being above all things

human and intimate, is naturally neglected by historians: it cannot be shown to have caused any political convulsions, or to have any economic effects'.[38]

Far from being motivated by political activism or pessimistic rural nostalgia, the hiking craze was essentially an optimistic celebration of youth, vitality, and increasing wealth, mobility and consumer choice. It was emblematic of a newly empowered, self-confident and assertive younger generation. Hikers went into the country because it provided a social space where they could enjoy a high degree of individual and collective freedom, and their uninhibited behaviour and unconventional dress shocked an older generation of trampers and ramblers who were accustomed to regard the British countryside as their own private domain.

The Youth Hostel Association was the greatest institutional achievement of the mass outdoor movement during the interwar years; a unique, largely voluntary, collaboration between pre-War trampers, preservationists and ramblers, and post-War hikers. The aspirations of the YHA leadership were more liberal and benevolent than many previous historical accounts have suggested but, in any event, the culture and values of the Association were largely determined by its youthful members and local organisers, rather than the elderly and remote establishment figures that presided over its committees.

The 'hiking craze' was apolitical and escapist. It was also relatively short-lived. Nevertheless, it transformed country walking from a minority pursuit into a mainstream leisure activity, attracting participants from all social classes. As the post-War generation of hikers aged, the cultural, class and generational distinctions described in this thesis gradually faded, and the three strands of the interwar movement converged. By the time that most hikers got their first opportunity to vote, in 1945, a few had become politicians, and many more voted for a government that was committed to a legislative programme of town and country planning, including increased access to and preservation of the countryside.[39] By sheer weight of numbers, participants in the mass outdoor movement enabled the pre-War generation of preservation and access campaigners to achieve many of their longstanding objectives, as part of the new, bureaucratic countryside elite installed by the Labour government in 1945. The legacy of the three strands of the interwar outdoor movement is therefore still evident today: shaping our aesthetic appreciation of British landscapes; transforming large parts of the rural economy from one based on agriculture, to one based on leisure; and

[38] Sidgwick, *Walking Essays*,181-82.
[39] Many hikers were too young to vote in the previous election in 1935.

redefining our cultural conception of ‘the countryside’ as an amenity to be accessed and, in some cases, preserved for the enjoyment of the urban population.

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